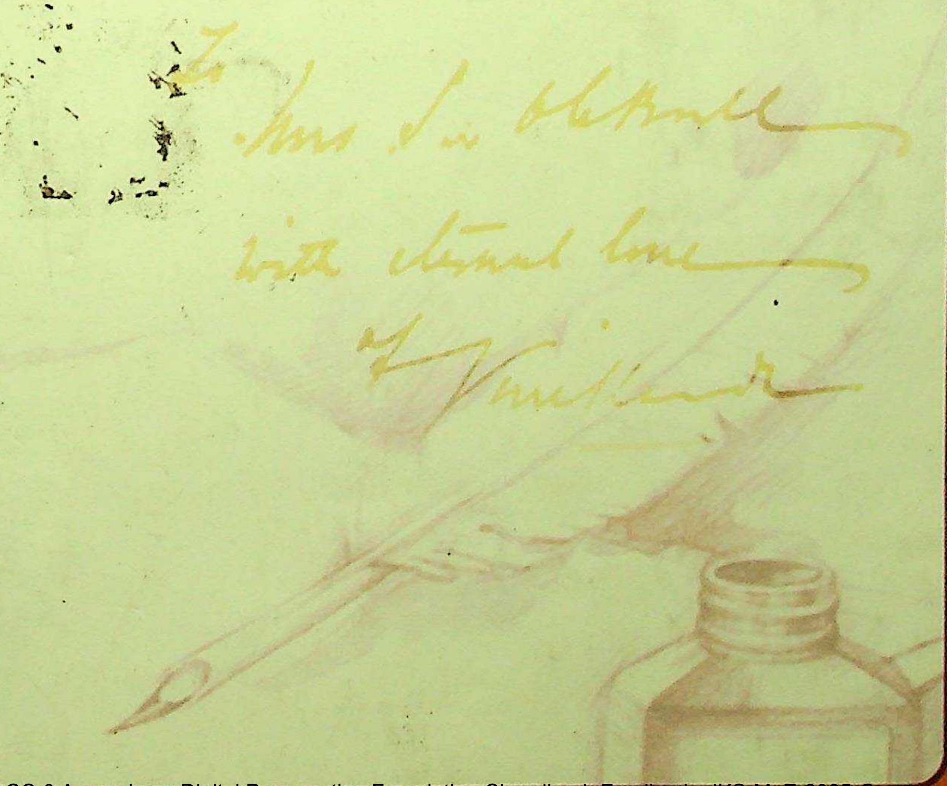
Letters of Swami Vivekananda



PRESS OPINIONS

Each one of these letters, we must say, is invigorating and edifying, and we are thankful to the Advaita Ashrama for having brought out this excellent book and thereby rendering a great service to the cause of nationalism.

— *The A.B. Patrika*

❖

They are human documents of value.

— *The Statesman*

❖

We have in these letters the priceless revelation of a unique personality.

— *The Hindu*

❖

This is a book of extraordinary public interest.

— *The Rangoon Daily News*

❖

Will be prized particularly by the younger generation.

— *The Bombay Chronicle*

❖

This volume will be a source of inspiration and strength to the readers in every sphere of life.

— *The Modern Review*

LETTERS OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Arise! Awake! Onward! I only tell you this,
that whoever reads this letter will imbibe
my spirit! Have faith! Onward!
— Swami Vivekananda —

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PREFACE

Letters are the reflections of one's mind. From private letters, where thoughts flow freely, we can study the growth and development of a person's mind and the inner history of his being. It is for this reason that the private letters of many public men are so much in demand. From their letters many aspects of the personality of those persons are known to the public, which would otherwise have been a sealed book to all.

The history of Swami Vivekananda's life is correlated with the awakening of India and the resuscitation of Indian religion. But how much agony and suffering that mighty soul had to undergo before he was able to set in motion a machinery which was to bring about an all-round awakening in Indian national life! A nation that seemed to have lost all self-respect and self-confidence, and was apparently dead, had to be roused. That was a tremendous task. Swami Vivekananda felt that this task was his. Very often, he would say he was born with that mission. But he had to accomplish in a short span of life (his real activities covered a period of not more than nine years) a work whose influence would last for many centuries. He wrote to some of his followers in India from across the sea: "Fifty centuries are looking on you, the future of India depends on you." Perhaps the disciples were amazed at such bold words. But the Seer with his prophetic vision saw across the corridor of time what was coming ahead.

The following letters show the plan of his work and the means he wanted to adopt for the fulfilment of his mission. Swami Vivekananda was impatient of the delay and the slow progress the country was making. People listened to him with rapt attention, admired him with almost fanatical zeal, but their actual works were not commensurate with their enthusiasm for hero-worship. Therefore they called for a sharp rebuke from the great Swami who wanted not worship but action.

With the passing of time, however, we find that more and more of Swami Vivekananda's ideas are being fulfilled.

But still many things remain unaccomplished. These letters contain hints for the present and future workers for the cause of India as to how the nation should be guided. "What is the secret of a successful organization?" "Why do Indians lack the power of collective action?" "How India's future is doomed if those defects in national character are not remedied"—these vital questions are answered in these letters, sometimes in very strong language by one whose sharpness of expression was only the outer garb of his great love for his people.

But Swami Vivekananda was not a patriot only. He was a Seer first and a patriot next. As Guru, as a Teacher, as a spiritual leader, he had to solve the deeper problems of the life of many. Every man is a hidden Brahman, but in life almost all act like miserable wretches. What is the cause of this disastrous anomaly? How to remove it? How can a man rise to the full stature of his Divinity?—by answering these questions one who had known his own Divinity was anxious to make others Divine. This is what we find in many of Swami Vivekananda's letters.

Swami Vivekananda was a militant monk, a dynamic personality, and a fiery soul. We can imagine what magnetic effects his letters had upon the life of those to whom they were addressed. His letters contain many passages, a single one of which is sufficient to bring about a great revolution and complete transformation in one's life. The same fire is hidden in them even now, though they were written many years ago. We have no doubt that this smouldering fire may be ablaze at any time and illumine any life in any clime. So they are presented to the general readers. "The Epistles of Swami Vivekananda" were formerly published in six parts. In the present edition we have brought them out in one handy volume, with some additional matter that has recently reached our hands. The letters are now arranged chronologically as far as possible. We hope that this improved edition will be more useful.

THE EDITOR

MAYAVATI,
1st January 1940

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

So many letters of Swami Vivekananda have come to light in recent years that they can fill up two volumes like the present one. We have, therefore, selected 229 of the best and most representative letters for this edition. For an exhaustive study of all of them the readers may turn to *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda.*

August 1960 PUBLISHER

PREFACE TO THE SECOND NEW EDITION

The book is thoroughly revised with a few additions here and there. Letter No. CXX of the last edition has been omitted as it is a repetition of No. LXXXV. As the "Notes on Persons" added at the end can help the readers in identifying the persons addressed or referred to, the footnotes serving the same purpose are eliminated as far as possible.

January 1964 PUBLISHER

Swami Vivekananda and Narasimhacharya, Chicago, 1893

LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

1*

Salutation to Bhagaván Ramakrishna !

THE BARANAGORE MATH,
19th Nov., 1888.

RESPECTED SIR,[1]

I have received the two books sent by you and am filled with joy to read your wonderfully affectionate letter which betokens your broad, generous heart. No doubt, it is due to good merit of my previous births that you show, sir, so much kindness to a mendicant like me who lives on begging. By sending your gift of the Vedanta, you have laid under life-long obligation not only myself but the whole group of Shri Ramakrishna's Sannyâsins. They all bow down to you in respect. It is not for my own sake alone that I asked of you the copy of Pânini's grammar; a good deal of study, in fact, is given to Sanskrit scriptures in this Math. The Vedas may well be said to have fallen quite out of vogue in Bengal. Many here in this Math are conversant with Sanskrit, and they have a mind to master the Samhitâ portions of the Vedas. They are of opinion that what has to be done must be done to a finish. So, believing that a full measure of proficiency in the Vedic language is impossible without first mastering Panini's grammar, which is the best available for the purpose, a copy of the latter was felt to be a necessity. The grammatical work *Mugdhabodha,* which we studied in our boyhood is superior in many respects to *Laghukaumudi.* You are yourself, however, a deeply learned man and, therefore, the best judge we can have in this matter. So if you consider the *Ashtâdhyâyi* (of Panini) to be the most suitable in our case, you will lay us under a debt of lifelong gratitude by sending the same (provided you feel it convenient and feel so inclined). This Math is not wanting in men of perseverance, talent, and penetrative intellect. I may hope that by the grace of our Master, they will acquire in a short time Panini's system and then succeed in restoring the Vedas to Bengal. I beg to send you two photographs of my revered Master and two parts of some of his teachings as given in his homely style, compiled and published by a certain gentleman—hoping you will give us the pleasure of your acceptance. My health is now much improved, and I expect the blessings of meeting you within two or three months. . . .

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* An asterisk after the letter number indicates that the letter is a translation from Bengali.

[1] Pramadadas Mitra of Varanasi.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

2

AUNTPUR,[1]
7th February, 1889.

DEAR M——,

I thank you a hundred thousand times, Master! You have hit Ramakrishna in the right point.

Few, alas, few understand him!

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. My heart leaps with joy—and it is a wonder that I do not go mad when I find anybody thoroughly launched into the midst of the doctrine which is to shower peace on earth hereafter.

---

[1] A village in the Hooghly District, the native place of Swami Premananda. The letter was written to Master Mahâshaya, the writer of *Kathâmrita* (Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna) in Bengali.

3*

Shri Durga be my Refuge!

BARANAGORE,
26th June, 1889.

DEAR SIR,[1]

For sundry reasons I have been unable to write to you for long, for which please excuse me. I have now obtained news of Gangadhar. He met one of my brother-disciples, and both are now staying in the Uttarakhanda (the sacred Himalayas). Four of us from here are in the Himalayas now, and with Gangadhar they are five. One brother-disciple named Shivananda came across Gangadhar at Srinagar on the way to holy Kedarnath, and Gangadhar has sent two letters here. During his first year in the Himalayas, he could not secure permission to enter Tibet, but he got it the next year. The Lamas love him much, and he has picked up the Tibetan language. He says the Lamas form ninety per cent of the population, but they mostly practise Tântrika forms of worship. The country is intensely cold—eatables there are scarcely any—only dried meat; and Gangadhar had to travel and live on that food. My health is passable, but the state of mind is terrible!

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

4*

Victory to God!

BAGHBAZAR, CALCUTTA,
4th July, 1889.

DEAR SIR,[1]

It pleased me highly to know all the news in your letter, yesterday. You have asked me to request Gangadhar to write to you, but I see no chance thereof, for though they are sending us letters, they do not stop anywhere for more than two or three days and therefore do not receive any of ours.

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[1] Pramadadas Mitra.

Some relative of my former life[1] has purchased a bungalow at Simultala (near Baidyanath in Bihar). The place being credited with a healthy climate, I stayed there for some time. But the summer heat growing excessive, I had an attack of acute diarrhoea, and I have just fled away from the place.

Words fail to describe how strong is the desire in my mind to go to Varanasi and have my soul blessed by meeting you and sojourning with you in good converse, but everything rests on His will! I wonder what linking of heart existed between us, sir, from some previous incarnation that, receiving as I do the love and affection of not a few men of wealth and position in this city of Calcutta, I am apt to feel so much bored by their society, while only through one day's interview, my heart felt charmed enough to accept you as a near relative and friend in spiritual life! One reason is that you are a favoured servant of God. Another perhaps is:

तच्चेतसा स्मरति नूनमबोधपूर्वं भाषस्थिरानि जननान्तरसौहृदानि । [2]

I am indebted to you for the advice which comes from you as the outcome of your experience and spiritual practice. It is very true, and I have also found it so very often, that one has to suffer at times for holding in one's brain novel views of all sorts.

But with me it is a different malady this time. I have not lost faith in a benign Providence—nor am I going ever to lose it—my faith in the scriptures is unshaken. But by the will of God, the last six or seven years of my life have been full of constant struggles with hindrances and obstacles of all sorts. I have been vouchsafed the ideal Shâstra (scripture); I have seen the ideal man; and yet fail myself to get on with anything to the end—this is my profound misery.

And particularly, I see no chance of success while remaining near Calcutta. In Calcutta live my mother and two brothers. I am the eldest; the second is preparing for the First Arts Examination, and the third is young.

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[1] i.e. the life he has renounced.

[2] Kâlidâsa's *Shâkuntalam*, Act V: "It must be the memories, unwittingly, recalled, of affinities firmly established in previous incarnations through depths of heart."

They were quite well off before, but since my father's death, it is going very hard with them—they even have to go fasting at times! To crown all, some relatives, taking advantage of their helplessness, drove them away from the ancestral residence. Though a part of it is recovered through suing at the High Court, destitution is now upon them—a matter of course in litigation.

Living near Calcutta I have to witness their adversity, and the quality of Rajas prevailing, my egotism sometimes develops into the form of a desire that rises to plunge me into action, in such moments, a fierce fighting ensues in my mind, and so I wrote that the state of my mind was terrible. Now their lawsuit has come to an end. So bless me that after a stay here in Calcutta for a few days more to settle matters, I may bid adieu to this place for ever.

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं
समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत् कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥[1]

Bless me that my heart may wax strong with supreme strength divine, and that all forms of Mâyâ may drop off from me for aye: "We have taken up the Cross, Thou hast laid it upon us, and grant us strength that we bear it unto death. Amen!"—*Imitation of Christ.*

I am now staying in Calcutta. My address is: c/o Balaram Babu, 57 Ramkanta Bose's Street, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] Gitâ, II.70: "Not he that lusteth after objects of desire, but he alone obtaineth peace in whom desires lose themselves like river-water flowing into the ocean but leaving it unaffected and unmodified in spite of constant accession."

5*

All Glory to God!

BARANAGORE, CALCUTTA,
7th August, 1889.

DEAR SIR,[1]

It is more than a week since I received your letter, but having had another attack of fever, I could not send a reply all this time, for which please excuse me. For an interval of a month and a half I kept well, but I have suffered again for the last ten days; now I am doing well.

I have certain questions to put, and you, sir, have a wide knowledge of Sanskrit; so please favour me with answers to the following:

1. Does any narrative occur about Satyakâma, son of Jabâlâ, and about Jânashruti, anywhere else in the Vedas excepting the Upanishads?[2]

2. In most cases where Shankarâchârya quotes Smriti in his commentary on the *Vedanta-Sutras,* he cites the authority of the Mahâbhârata. But seeing that we find clear proofs about caste being based on qualification both in the Bhisma-parva of the Mahabharata and in the stories there of the Ajagara and of Umâ and Maheshvara, has he made any mention in his writings of this fact?

3. The doctrine of caste in the *Purusha-Sukta* of the Vedas does not make it hereditary—so what are those instances in the Vedas where caste has been made a matter of hereditary transmission?

4. The Âchârya could not adduce any proof from the Vedas to the effect that the Shudra should not study the Vedas. He only quotes 'यज्ञेऽनवक्लृप्तः'[3] to maintain that when he is not entitled to perform Yajnas, he has neither any right to study

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[1] Pramadadas Mitra.

[2] The real import of this question lies in the fact that Shankarâchârya in his commentary on the *Vedanta-Sutras*, I. iii. 34-37, interprets the aphorisms to prove that Upanishadic wisdom was imparted to Janashruti and Satyakama, only because they were *not* Shudras, as borne out by actual texts. But as these texts are doubtful even after Shankaracharya's explanation, Swamiji wants to be referred to other Vedic texts where mention has been made of these persons.

[3] "The Shudra is not conceived of as a performer of Yajna or Vedic sacrifices."—Taittiriya Samhita, VII. i. 1. 6.

the Upanishads and the like. But the same Acharya contends with reference to 'अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा'[1] that the word अथ (now then) here does not mean "subsequent to the study of the Vedas", because it is contrary to proof that the study of the Upanishad is not permissible without the previous study of the Vedic Mantras and *Brâhmanas* and because there is no intrinsic sequence between the Vedic Karma-kânda (section about rituals) and Vedic Jnâna-kânda (section about knowedge). It is evident, therefore, that one may attain to the knowledge of Brahman without having studied the ceremonial parts of the Vedas. So if there is no sequence between the sacrificial practices and Jnana, why does the Acharya contradict his own statement when it is a case of the Shudras, by inserting the clause "by force of the same logic"? Why should the Shudra not study the Upanishad?

I am mailing you, sir, a book named *Imitation of Christ* written by a Christian Sannyasin. It is a wonderful book. One is astonished to find that such renunciation, Vairâgya, and Dâsya-Bhakti (devotion like that of a faithful servant) have existed even among the Christians. Probably you may have read this book before; if not, it will give me the greatest pleasure if you will kindly read it.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

6*

BARANAGORE,
17th Aug., 1889.

DEAR SIR,[2]

You hāve expressed embarrassment in your last favour for being addressed reverentially. But the blame attaches not to me but to your own excellent qualities. I wrote in one letter before that from the way I feel attracted by your lofty virtues, it seems we had some affinity from previous births. I make no distinction as to householder or Sannyasin in this, that for all time my head shall bend low in reverence wherever I see greatness, broadness of heart, and holiness—Shântih, Shântih, Shântih (Peace, Peace, Peace)! My prayer is that among the many people embracing Sannyâsa nowadays, greedy of honour, posing renunciation for the sake of a living, and fallen off from the ideal on both sides, may one in a lakh at least become high-souled like you! To you my Brahmin fellow-disciples who have heard of your noble virtues tender their best prostrations. . . .

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[1] *Vedânta-Sutras* of Vyasa, I. i. 1. It means, "Now then commences hence the inquiry about Brahman."

[2] Pramadadas Mitra'.

About one amongst my several questions to which you sent your replies, my wrong idea is corrected. For this I shall remain indebted to you for ever. Another of these questions was: Whether Acharya Shankara gives any conclusion regarding caste based on Gunas as mentioned in Purânas like the Mahabharata. If he does, where is it to be found? I have no doubt that according to the ancient view in this country, caste was hereditary, and it cannot also be doubted that sometimes the Shudras used to be oppressed more than the helots among the Spartans and the Negroes among the Americans! As for myself, I have no partiality for any party in this caste question, because I know it is a social law and is based on diversity of Guṇa (merit) and Karma (result of past action). It also means grave harm if one bent on going beyond Guna and Karma cherishes in mind any caste distinctions. In these matters, I have got some settled ideas through the grace of my Guru, but if I come to know of your views, I may just confirm some points or rectify others in them. One doesn't have honey dripping unless one pokes at the hive—so I shall put you some more questions, and looking upon me as ignorant and as a boy, please give proper replies without taking any offence.

1. Is the Mukti, which the *Vedânta-Sutras* speak of, one and the same with the Nirvâna of the *Avadhuta-Gitâ* and other texts?

2. What is really meant by Nirvana if, according to the aphorism, "Without the function of creating etc."[1], none can attain to the fullest Godhead?

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[1] *Vedanta-Sutras*, IV. iv. 17. This aphorism is : जगद्व्यापारवर्जं प्रकरणा-

3. Chaitanyadeva is said to have told Sârvabhauma at Puri, "I understand the Sutras (aphorisms) of Vyasa, they are dualistic; but the commentator makes them monistic, which I don't understand". Is this true? Tradition says, Chaitanyadeva had a dispute with Prakashananda Sarasvati on the point, and Chaitanyadeva won. One commentary by Chaitanyadeva was rumoured to have been existing in Prakashananda's Math.

4. In the Tantra, Acharya Shankara has been called a crypto-Buddhist, views expressed in *Prajnâpâramitâ,* the Buddhist Mahâyâna book, perfectly tally with the Vedantic views propounded by the Acharya. The author of *Panchadashi* also says, "What we call Brahman is the same truth as the Shunya of the Buddhists." What does all this mean?

5. Why has no foundation for the authority of the Vedas been adduced in the *Vedanta-Sutras*? First, it has been said that the Vedas are the authority for the existence of God, and then it has been argued that the authority for the Vedas is the text: "It is the breath of God." Now, is this statement not vitiated by what in Western logic is called an argument in a circle?

6. The Vedanta requires of us faith, for conclusiveness cannot be reached by mere argumentation. Then, why has the slightest flaw, detected in the position of the schools of Sânkhya and Nyâya, been overwhelmed with a fusillade of dialectics? In whom, moreover, are we to put our faith? Everybody seems to be mad over establishing his own view; if, according to Vyasa, even the great Muni Kapila, "the

दसंनिहितत्वाच्च ।—"Having regard to the context which ascribes the three-fold function relating to the universe only to God, and because the fact of their conscious mental distinction comes between that function and their liberated state, we have to conclude that the state of final liberation or Mukti in the case of men is devoid of the capacity to create, preserve, and dissolve the universe." So if this capacity is reserved only for God, what is meant, Swamiji asks, by saying that in Nirvana the human merges completely into the Divine?

We must remember that many of the questions here reflect the intellectual stages through which Swamiji was reaching out in those days towards that plenitude of Vedantic wisdom which was his in future years. We also find a glimpse of those processes through which his intellect was growing towards a fuller understanding of our ancient scriptures and customs.

greatest among perfected souls",[1] is himself deeply involved in error, then who would say that Vyasa may not be so involved in a greater measure? Did Kapila fail to understand the Vedas?

7. According to the Nyaya, "Shabda, or Veda (the criterion of truth), is the word of those who have realized the highest"; so the Rishis as such are omniscient. Then how are they proved, according to the *Surya-siddhânta,* to be ignorant of such simple astronomical truths? How can we accept their intelligence as the refuge to ferry us across the ocean of transmigratory existence, seeing that they speak of the earth as triangular, of the serpent Vâsuki as the support of the earth, and so on?

8. If in His acts of creation God is dependent on good and evil Karmas, then what does it avail us to worship Him? There is a fine song of Nareshchandra, where occurs the following: "If what lies in one's destiny is to happen anyhow, O Mother, then what good all this invoking by the holy name of Durgâ?"

9. True, it is improper to hold many texts on the same subject to be contradicted by one or two. But why then are the long-continued customs of Madhuparka and the like repealed by one or two such texts as, "The horse sacrifice, the cow sacrifice, Sannyasa, meat-offerings in Shrâddha", etc?[2] If the Vedas are eternal, then what are the meaning and justification of such specifications as "this rule of Dharma is for the age of Dvâpara", "this for the age of Kali", and so forth?

10. The same God who gives out the Vedas became Buddha again to annul them; which of these dispensations is to be obeyed? Which of these remains authoritative, the earlier or the later one?

11. The Tantra says, in the Kali-Yuga the Veda-Mantras are futile. So which behest of God, the Shiva, is to be followed?

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[1] Kapila is so spoken of in Gitâ, X. 26. In his commentary on *Vedanta-Sutras*, II. i. 1, Shankara doubts the identity of the Vedic Kapila with the Sankhyan Kapila.

[2] Madhuparka was a Vedic ceremony, usually in honour of a guest, in which a respectful offering was to be made consisting, among other dainties, of beef. The text which Swamiji partially quotes forbids such food. The full text means that in the Kali-Yuga the following five customs are to be forsaken: The horse sacrifice, cow-killing ceremonies, meat-offerings in Shraddha, Sannyasa, and maintaining the line of progeny through the husband's younger brother in case of failure through the husband.

12. Vyasa makes out in the *Vedanta-Sutras* that it is wrong to worship the tetrad of divine manifestation, Vâsudeva, Sankarshana, etc., and again that very Vyasa expatiates on the great merits of that worship in the Bhâgavata! Is this Vyasa a madman?

I have many doubts besides these, and, hoping to have them dispelled from my mind through your kindness, I shall lay them before you in future. Such questions cannot be all set forth except in a personal interview; neither can as much satisfaction be obtained as one expects to. So I have a mind to lay before you all these facts when presenting myself to you, which I expect will be very soon, by the grace of the Guru.

I have heard it said that without inner progress in the practice of religion, no true conclusion can be reached, concerning these matters, simply by means of reasoning; but satisfaction, at least to some extent, seems to be necessary at the outset.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

7*

C/o BABU SATISH CHANDRA MUKHERJI,
GORABAZAR, GHAZIPUR,
21st Jan., 1890.

DEAR SIR,[1]

I reached Ghazipur three days ago. Here I am putting up in the house of Babu Satish Chandra Mukherji, a friend of my early age. The place is very pleasant. Close by flows the Ganga; but bathing there is troublesome, for there is no regular path, and it is hard work wading through sands. Babu Ishan Chandra Mukherji, my friend's father, that noble-hearted man of whom I spoke to you, is here. Today he is leaving for Varanasi whence he will proceed to Calcutta. I again had a great mind to go over to Kashi, but the object of my coming here, namely, an interview with the Bâbâji[2] has not yet been realized, and hence the delay of a few days becomes necessary. Everything here appears good. The people are all gentlemen, but very much Westernised; and it is a pity I am so thoroughly against every affectation of the Western idea. Only my friend very little affects such idea. What a frippery civilization is it indeed that the foreigners have brought over here! What a materialistic illusion have they created! May Vishvanâtha[1] save these weak-hearted! After seeing Babaji, I shall send you a detailed account.

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[1] Pramadadas Mitra.

[2] Pavhari Bâbâ, the great saint of Ghazipur.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Alas the irony of our fate, that in this land of Bhagavân Shuka's birth, renunciation is looked down upon as madness and sin!

8*

GHAZIPUR,
7th Feb., 1890.

DEAR SIR,[2]

I feel very happy to hear from you just now. Apparently in his features, the Babaji is a Vaishnava, the embodiment, so to speak, of Yoga, Bhakti, and humility. His dwelling has walls on all sides with a few doors in them. Inside these walls, there is one long underground burrow wherein he lays himself up in Samâdhi. He talks to others only when he comes out of the hole. Nobody knows what he eats, and so they call him Pavhâri (air-eating) Bâbâ. Once he did not come out of the hole for five years, and people thought he had given up the body. But now again he is out. But this time he does not show himself to people and talks from behind the door. Such sweetness in speech I have never come across! He does not give a direct reply to questions but says, "What does this servant know?" But then fire comes out as the talking goes on. On my pressing him very much he said, "Favour me highly by staying here some days". But he never speaks in this way; so from this I understood he meant to reassure me; and whenever I am importunate, he asks me to stay on. So I wait in hope. He is a learned man no doubt, but nothing in the line betrays itself. He performs scriptural ceremonials, for from the full-moon day to the last day of the month, sacrificial oblations go on. So it is sure, he is not retiring into the hole during this period. How can I ask his permission,[1] for he never gives a direct reply! he goes on multiplying such expressions as "this servant", "my fortune", and so on. If you yourself have a mind, then come sharp on receipt of this note. Of after his passing away, the keenest regret will be left in your mind. In two days you may return after an interview—I mean a talk with him from outside. My friend Satish Babu will receive you most warmly. So, do come up directly you receive this; I shall meanwhile let Babaji know of you.

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[1] Lord of the Universe, i.e. Shiva, presiding deity of Varanasi.

[2] Pramadadas Mitra.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Even though one can't have his company, no trouble taken for the sake of such a great soul can ever go unrewarded.

9*

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna !

C/o SATISH MUKHERJI,
GORABAZAR, GHAZIPUR,
14th February, 1890.

REVERED SIR,[2]

I am in receipt of your letter of contrition. I am not leaving this place soon—it is impossible to avoid the Babaji's request. You have expressed remorse at not having reaped any appreciable results by serving the Sâdhus (holy men). It is true, and yet not true; it is true if you look towards ideal bliss, but if you look behind to the place from which you started you will find that before you were an animal, now you are a man, and will be a god or God Himself in future. Moreover, that sort of regret and dissatisfaction is very good; it is the prelude to improvement. Without this none can rise. He who puts on a turban and immediately sees the Lord, progresses thus far and no farther. You are blessed indeed to have that constant dissatisfaction preying upon your mind—rest assured that there is no danger for you. . . . You are a keenly intelligent man, and know full well that patience is the best means of success. In this respect I have no doubt that we light-headed boys have much to learn from you. . . . You are a considerate man, and I need not add anything. Man has two ears but one mouth. You specially are given to plain-speaking, and are chary of making large promises—things that sometimes make me cross with you, but upon reflection I find that it is you who have acted with discretion. "Slow but sure." "What is lost in power is gained in speed." However, in this world everything depends upon one's words. To get an insight behind the words (specially, with your economical spirit masking all) is not given to all, and one must associate long with a man to be able to understand him. . . . Religion is not in sects, nor in making a fuss—why do you forget these teachings of our revered Master? Please help as far as it lies in you, but to judge what came of it, whether it was turned to good or evil account, is perhaps beyond our jurisdiction. . . . Considering the great shock which Girish Babu has received, it will give him immense peace to serve Mother at this moment. He is a very keen-witted person. And our beloved Master had perfect confidence in you, used to dine nowhere else except at your place, and, I have heard, Mother too has the fullest confidence in you. In view of these, you will please bear and forbear all shortcomings of us fickle boys, treating them as if they were done by your own boy. This is all I have got to say. Please let me know by return of post when the (birthday) Anniversary (of Shri Ramakrishna) is to take place. A pain in the loins is giving me much trouble. In a few days the place will look exceedingly beautiful, with miles and miles of rose-banks all in flower. Satish says he will then send some fresh roses and cuttings for the Festival. . . . May the Lord ordain that your son becomes a man, and never a coward!

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[1] Evidently for a proposed visit to the saint by the correspondent from Varanasi.

[2] Balaram Bose.

Your affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. If Mother has come, please convey to her my countless salutations, and ask her to bless me that I may have unflinching perseverance. Or, if that be impossible in this body, may it fall off soon!

10*

GHAZIPUR,
14th February, 1890.

MY DEAR GUPTA,

I hope you are doing well. Do your own spiritual exercise and, knowing yourself to be the humblest servant of all, serve them. Those with whom you are staying are such that even I am not worthy to call myself their humblest servant and take the dust of their feet. Knowing this, serve them and have devotion for them. Don't be angry even if they abuse or even hurt you desperately. Never mix with women. Try to be hardy little by little, and gradually accustom yourself to maintaining the body out of the proceeds of begging. Whoever takes the name of Ramakrishna, know him to be your Guru. Everyone can play the role of a master, but it is very difficult to be a servant. Specially you should follow Shashi. Know it for certain that without steady devotion for the Guru and unflinching patience and perseverance, nothing is to be achieved. You must have strict morality. Deviate an inch from this and you are gone for ever.

Your affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

11*

Victory to the Lord!

GHAZIPUR,
19th Feb., 1890.

DEAR SIR,[1]

I wrote a letter to brother Gangadhar asking him to stop his wanderings and settle down somewhere and to send me an account of the various Sadhus he had come across in Tibet and their ways and customs. I enclose the reply that came from him. Brother Kali is having repeated attacks of fever at Hrishikesh. I have sent him a wire from this place. So if from the reply I find I am wanted by him, I shall be obliged to start direct for Hrishikesh from this place, otherwise I am coming to you in a day or two. Well, you may smile, sir, to see me weaving all this web of Mâyâ—and that is no doubt the fact. But then there is the chain of iron, and there is the chain of gold. Much good comes of the latter; and it drops off by itself when all the good is reaped. The sons of my Master are indeed the great objects of my service, and here alone I feel I have some duty left for me. Perhaps I shall send brother Kali down to Allahabad or somewhere else, as convenient. At your feet are laid a hundred and one faults of mine—"I am as thy son, so guide me who have taken refuge in thee."[2]

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

12*

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

GHAZIPUR,
February, 1890.

BELOVED AKHANDANANDA,

Very glad to receive your letter. What you have written about Tibet is very promising, and I shall try to go there once. In Sanskrit Tibet is called the Uttarakuruvarsha, and is not a land of Mlechchhas. Being the highest tableland in the world, it is extremely cold, but by degrees one may become accustomed to it. About the manners and customs of the Tibetans you have written nothing; if they are so hospitable, why did they not allow you to go on? Please write everything in detail, in a long letter. I am sorry to learn that you will not be able to come, for I had a great longing to see you. It seems that I love you more than all others. However, I shall try to get rid of this Maya too.

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[1] Pramadadas Mitra.

[2] An adaptation from the Gitâ, II. 7.

The Tântrika rites among the Tibetans that you have spoken of arose in India itself, during the decline of Buddhism. It is my belief that the Tantras, in vogue amongst us, were the creation of the Buddhists themselves. Those Tantrika rites are even more dreadful than our doctrine of Vâmâchâra; for in them adultery got a free rein, and it was only when the Buddhists became demoralized through immorality that they were driven away by Kumarila Bhatta. As some Sannyasins speak of Shankara, or the Bâuls of Shri Chaitanya, that he was in secret an epicure, a drunkard, and one addicted to all sorts of abominable practice—so the modern Tantrika Buddhists speak of the Lord Buddha as a dire Vâmâchâri, and give an obscene interpretation to the many beautiful precepts of the *Prajnâpâramitâ*, such as the *Tattvagâthâ* and the like. The result of all this has been that the Buddhists are divided into two sects nowadays; the Burmese and the Sinhalese have generally set the Tantras at naught, have likewise banished the Hindu gods and goddesses, and at the same time have thrown overboard the Amitâbha Buddha held in regard among the Northern School of Buddhists. The long and the short of it is that the Amitabha Buddha and the other gods whom the Northern School worship are not mentioned in books like the *Prajnaparamita*, but a lot of gods and goddesses are recommended for worship. And the Southern people have wilfully transgressed the Shâstras and eschewed the gods and goddesses. The phase of Buddhism which declares "Everything for others", and which you find spread throughout Tibet, has greatly struck modern Europe. Concerning that phase, however, I have a good deal to say—which it is impossible to do in this letter. What Buddha did was to break wide open the gates of that very religion which was confined in the Upanishads to a particular caste. What special greatness does his theory of Nirvana confer on him? His greatness lies in his unrivalled sympathy. The high orders of Samadhi, etc., that lend gravity to his religion, are almost all there in the Vedas; what are absent there are his intellect and heart, which have never since been paralleled throughout the history of the world.

The Vedic doctrine of Karma is the same as in Judaism and all other religions, that is to say, the purification of the mind through sacrifices and such other external means—and Buddha was the first man who stood against it. But the inner essence of the ideas remained as of old—look at that doctrine of mental exercises which he preached, and that mandate of his to believe in the Suttas instead of the Vedas. Caste also remained as of old (caste was not wholly obsolete at the time of Buddha), but it was now determined by personal qualifications; and those that were not believers in his religion were declared as heretics, all in the old style. "Heretic" was a very ancient word with the Buddhists, but then they never had recourse to the sword (good souls!) and had great toleration. Argument blew up the Vedas. But what is the proof of your religion? Well, put faith in it!—the same procedure as in all religions. It was however an imperative necessity of the times; and that was the reason of his having incarnated himself. His doctrine is like that of Kapila. But that of Shankara, how far more grand and rational! Buddha and Kapila are always saying the world is full of grief and nothing but that—flee from it—ay, for your life, do! Is happiness altogether absent here? It is a statement of the nature of what the Brahmos say: The world is full of happiness! There is grief, forsooth, but what can be done? Perchance some will suggest that grief itself will appear as happiness when you become used to it by constant suffering. Shankara does not take this line of argument. He says: This world *is* and *is not*; *manifold*, yet *one*; I shall unravel its mystery—I shall know whether grief be there, or anything else; I do not flee from it as from a bugbear. I will know all about it; as to the infinite pain that attends its search, well, I am embracing it in its fullest measure. Am I a beast that you frighten me with happiness and misery, decay and death, which are but the outcome of the senses? I will know about it—will give up my life for it. There is nothing to know about in this world—therefore, if there be anything beyond this relative existence—what the Lord Buddha has designated as Prajnâpâra, the transcendental—if such there be, I want that alone. Whether happiness attends it or grief, I do not care. What a lofty idea! How grand! The religion of Buddha has reared itself on the Upanishads, and upon that also the philosophy of Shankara. Only, Shankara had not the slightest bit of Buddha's wonderful heart, dry intellect merely! For fear of the Tantras, for fear of the mob, in his attempt to cure a boil he amputated the very arm itself![1] One has to write a big volume if one has to write about them at all—but I have neither the learning nor the leisure for it.

Lord Buddha is my Ishta—my God. He preached no theory about Godhead—he was himself God, I fully believe it. But no one has the power to put a limit to God's infinite glory. No, not even God Himself has the power to make Himself limited. The translation of the *Gandâra-Sutta* that you have made from the *Suttanipâta,* is excellent. In that book there is another *Sutta*—the *Dhaniya-Sutta*—which has got a similar idea. There are many passages in the *Dhammapada* too, with similar ideas. But that is at the last stage when one has got perfectly satisfied with knowledge and realization, when one is the same under all circumstances and has gained mastery over his senses—ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः । He who has not the least regard for his body as something to be taken care of—it is he who may roam about at pleasure like the mad elephant caring for naught. Whereas a puny creature like myself should practise devotion, sitting at one spot, till he attains realization, and then, only should he behave like that. But it is a far-off question—very far indeed.

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[1] In his anxiety to defend the purity of the Vedic religion against the excesses of Tantrikism, which was capturing the rank and file of his countrymen. Shankara neglected the problem of the latter, stigmatized as Shudras by the Vedicists. This is perhaps the meaning of Swamiji. It seems he could never forgive Shankara for applying in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sutras* the old logic of forbidding Vedic rituals to the Shudras to the more modern question of their right to higher modes of worship (Upâsanâ) and knowledge (Jnâna) of the Jnâna-kânda.

चिन्ताशून्यमदैन्यभैक्षमशनं पानं सरिद्वारिषु
स्वातन्त्र्येण निरंकुशा स्थितिरभीर्निद्रा श्मशाने वने।
वस्त्रं क्षालनशोषणादिरहितं दिग्वास्तु शय्या मही
सञ्चारो निगमान्तवीथिषु विदां क्रीडा परे ब्रह्मणि॥
विमानमालम्ब्य शरीरमेतत्
भुनक्त्यशेषान् विषयानुपस्थितान्।
परेच्छया बालवदात्मवेत्ता
योऽव्यक्तलिङ्गोऽननुषक्तबाह्यः॥
दिगम्बरो वापि च साम्बरो वा
त्वगम्बरो वापि चिदम्बरस्थः।
उन्मत्तवद्वापि च बालवद्वा
पिशाचवद्वापि चरत्यवन्याम्॥

(*Vivekachudâmani*, 538-40)

—To a knower of Brahman food comes of itself, without effort—he drinks water wherever he gets it. He roams at pleasure everywhere—he is fearless, sleeps sometimes in the forest, sometimes in a crematorium, and treads the path which the Vedas have taken but whose end they have not seen. His body is like the sky; and he is guided, like a child, by others' wishes; he is sometimes naked, sometimes in gorgeous clothes, and at times has only Jnana as his clothing; he behaves sometimes like a child, sometimes like a madman, and at other times again like a ghoul, indifferent to cleanliness.

I pray to the holy feet of our Guru that you may have that state, and you may wander like the rhinoceros.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

13*

Victory to the Lord!

GHAZIPUR,
3rd March, 1890.

DEAR SIR[1]

Your kind letter comes to hand just now. You know not, sir, I am a very soft-natured man in spite of the stern Vedantic views I hold. And this proves to be my undoing. At the slightest touch I give myself away; for howsoever I may try to think only of my own good, I slip off in spite of myself to think of other peoples' interests. This time it was with a very stern resolve that I set out to pursue my own good, but I had to run off at the news of the illness of a brother[2] at Allahabad! And now comes this news from Hrishikesh, and my mind has run off with me there. I have wired to Sharat, but no reply yet —a nice place indeed to delay even telegrams so much! The lumbago obstinately refuses to leave me, and the pain is very great. For the last few days I haven't been able to go to see Pavhariji, but out of his kindness he sends every day for my report. But now I see the whole matter is inverted in its bearings! While I myself have come, a beggar, at his door, he turns round and wants to learn of me! This saint perhaps is not yet perfected—too much of practices, vows, observances, and too much of self-concealment. The ocean in its fullness cannot be contained within its shores, I am sure. So it is not good, I have decided, to disturb this Sadhu for nothing, and very soon I shall ask leave of him to go. No help, you see; Providence has dealt me my death to make me so tender! Babaji does not let me off, and Gagan Babu (whom probably you know—an upright, pious, and kind-hearted man) does not let me off. If the wire in reply requires my leaving this place, I go, if not, I am coming to you at Varanasi in a few days. I am not going to let you off—I must take you to Hrishikesh—no excuse or objections will do. What are you saying about difficulties there of keeping clean? Lack of water in the hills or lack of room! Tirthas (places of pilgrimage) and Sannyasins of the Kali-Yuga—you know what they are. Spend money and the owners of temples will fling away the installed god to make room for you; so no anxiety about a resting place! No trouble to face there, I say; the summer heat has set in there now, I believe, though not that degree of it as you find at Varanasi—so much the better. Always the nights are quite cool there, from which good sleep is almost a certainty.

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[1] Pramadadas Mitra.
[2] Swami Yogananda suffering from chicken pox.

Why do you get frightened so much? I stand guarantee that you shall return home safe and that you shall have no trouble anywhere. It is my experience that in this British realm no fakir or householder gets into any trouble.

Is it a mere idle fancy of mine that between us there is some connection from previous birth? Just see how one letter from you sweeps away all my resolution, and I bend my steps towards Varanasi leaving all matters behind! . . .

I have written again to brother Gangadhar and have asked him this time to return to the Math. If he comes, he will meet you. How is the climate at Varanasi now? By my stay here I have been cured of all other symptoms of malaria, only the pain in the loins makes me frantic; day and night it is aching and chafes me very much. I know not how I shall climb up the hills. I find wonderful endurance in (Pavhari) Babaji, and that's why I am begging something of him; but no inkling of the mood to give, only receiving and receiving! So I also fly off.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. To no big person am I going any longer—"Remain, O mind, within yourself, go not to anybody else's door; whatever you seek, you shall obtain sitting at your ease, only seek for it in the privacy of your heart. There is the supreme Treasure, the philosopher's stone, and He can give whatever you ask for; for countless gems, O mind, lie strewn about the portals of His abode. He is the wishingstone that confers boons at the mere thought." Thus says the poet Kamalâkânta.

So now the great conclusion is that Ramakrishna has no peer; nowhere else in this world exists that unprecedented perfection, that wonderful kindness for all that does not stop to justify itself, that intense sympathy for man in bondage. Either he must be the Avatâra as he himself used to say, or else the ever-perfected divine man, whom the Vedanta speaks of as the free one, who assumes a body for the good of humanity. This is my conviction sure and certain; and the worship of such a divine man has been referred to by Patanjali in the aphorism: "Or the goal may be attained by meditating on a saint."[1]

Never during his life did he refuse a single prayer of mine; millions of offences has he forgiven me; such great love even my parents never had for me. There is no poetry, no exaggeration in all this. It is the bare truth and every disciple of his knows it. In times of great danger, great temptation, I have wept in extreme agony with the prayer, "O God, do save me", and no response has come from anybody; but this wonderful saint, or Avatara, or anything else he may be, has come to know of all my affliction through his powers of insight into human hearts and has lifted it off—in spite of my desire to the contrary—after getting me brought to his presence. If the soul be deathless, and so, if he still lives, I pray to him again and again, "O Bhagavan Ramakrishna, thou infinite ocean of mercy and my only refuge, do graciously fulfil the desires of my esteemed friend, who is every inch a great man." May he impart to you all good, he whom alone I have found in this world to be like an ocean of unconditioned mercy! Shântih, Shantih, Shantih.

Please send a prompt reply.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] Pạtanjali's aphorism has "Ishvara" in place of "saint". One of Narada's aphorisms runs thus: Bhakti (devotion) is attainable chiefly through the grace of a saint, or by a bit of Divine Grace.

14*

57 Ramkanta Bose Street,
Baghbazar, Calcutta,
26th May, 1890

Dear Sir,[1]

I write this to you while caught in a vortex of many untoward circumstances and great agitation of mind; with a prayer to Vishvanatha, please think of the propriety and possibility, or otherwise, of all that I set forth below and then oblige me greatly by a reply.

1. I have already told you at the outset that I am Ramakrishna's slave; having laid my body at his feet "with Til and Tulasi leaves", I cannot disregard his behest. If it is in failure that that great sage laid down his life after having attained to superhuman heights of Jnana, Bhakti, Love, and powers, and after having practised for forty years stern renunciation, non-attachment, holiness, and great austerities, then where is there anything for us to count on? So I am obliged to trust his words as the words of one identified with truth.

2. Now his behest to me was that I should devote myself to the service of the order of all-renouncing devotees founded by him, and in this I have to persevere, come what may, being ready to take heaven, hell, salvation, or anything that may happen to me.

3. His command was that his all-renouncing devotees should group themselves together and I am entrusted with seeing to this. Of course, it matters not if any one of us goes out on visits to this place or that, but these shall be but visits, while his own opinion was that absolute homeless wandering suited him alone who was perfected to the highest point. Before that state, it is proper to settle somewhere to dive down into practice. When all the ideas of body and the like are dissolved of themselves, a person may then pursue whatever state comes to him. Otherwise, it is baneful for a practising aspirant to be always wandering.

4. So in pursuance of this his commandment, his group of Sannyasins are now assembled in a dilapidated house at

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[1] Pramadadas Mitra.

Baranagore, and two of his lay disciples, Babu Suresh Chandra Mitra and Babu Balaram Bose, so long provided for their food and house-rent.

5. For various reasons, the body of Bhagavan Ramakrishna had to be consigned to fire. There is no doubt that this act was very blameable. The remains of his ashes are now preserved, and if they be now properly enshrinerd somewhere on the banks of the Ganga, I presume we shall be able in some measure to expiate the sin lying on our heads. These sacred remains, his seat, and his picture are every day worshipped in our Math in proper form; and it is known to you that a brother-disciple of mine,[1] of Brahmin parentage, is occupied day and night with the task. The expenses of the worship used also to be borne by the two great souls mentioned above.

6. What greater regret can there be than this that no memorial could yet be raised in this land of Bengal in the very neighbourhood of the place where he lived his life of Sâdhanâ (spiritual struggle)—he by whose birth the race of Bengali's has been sanctified, the land of Bengal has become hallowed, he who came on earth to save the Indians from the spell of the worldly glamour of Western culture and who therefore chose most of his all-renouncing disciples from university men?

7. The two gentlemen mentioned above had a strong desire to have some land purchased on the banks of the Ganga and see the sacred remains enshrined on it, with the disciples living there together; and Suresh Babu had offered a sum of Rs. 1,000 for the purpose, promising to give more, but for some inscrutable purpose of God he left this world last night! And the news of Balaram Babu's death is already known to you.

8. Now there is no knowing as to where his disciples will stand with his sacred remains and his seat (and you know well, people here in Bengal are profuse in their professions, but do not stir out an inch in practice). The disciples are Sannyasins and are ready forthwith to depart anywhere their way may lie. But I, their servant, am in an agony of sufferings, and my heart is breaking to think that a small piece of land could not be had in which to install the remains of Bhagavan Ramakrishna.

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[1] **Shashi or Swami Ramakrishnananda.**

9. It is impossible with a sum of Rs. 1,000 to secure land and raise a temple near Calcutta. Some such land would at least cost about five to seven thousands.

10. You remain now the only friend and patron of Shri Ramakrishna's disciples. In the North-Western Province (i.e. Uttar Pradesh) great indeed is your fame, your position, and your circle of acquaintance. I request you to consider, if you feel like it, the propriety of your getting the affair through by raising subscriptions from well-to-do pious men known to you in your province. If you deem it proper to have some shelter erected on the banks of Ganga in Bengal for Bhagavan Ramakrishna's sacred remains and for his disciples, I shall with your leave report myself to you, and I have not the slightest qualm to beg from door to door for this noble cause, for the sake of my Lord and his children. Please give this proposal your best thoughts with prayers to Vishvanatha. To my mind, if all these sincere, educated, youthful Sannyasins of good birth fail to live up to the ideals of Shri Ramakrishna owing to want of an abode and help, then alas for our country!

11. If you ask, "You are a Sannyasin, so why do you trouble over these desires?"—I would then reply, I am Ramakrishna's servant, and I am willing even to steal and rob, if by doing so I can perpetuate his name in the land of his birth and Sadhana (spiritual practice) and help even a little his disciples to practise his great ideals. I know you to be my closest in kinship, and I lay my mind bare to you. I have returned to Calcutta for this reason. I had told you this before I left, and now I leave it to you to do what you think best.

12. If you argue that it is better to have the plan carried out in some place like Kashi, my point is, as I have told you, it would be the greatest pity if the memorial shrine could not be raised in the land of his birth and Sadhana! The condition of Bengal is pitiable. The people here cannot even dream what renunciation truly means—luxury and sensuality have been so much eating into the vitals of the race! May God send renunciation and unworldliness into this land! They have here nothing to speak of, while the people of the North Western Province, specially the rich there, as I believe, have great zeal in noble causes like this. Please send me such reply as you think best

Gangadhar has not yet arrived today and may do so tomorrow. I am so eager to see him again.

Please write to the address given above.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

15

BOMBAY,
20th September, 1892.

DEAR PANDITJI MAHARAJ,[1]

Your letter has reached me duly. I do not know why I should be undeservingly praised. "None is good, save One, that is, God", as the Lord Jesus hath said. The rest are only tools in His hands. "Gloria in Excelsis." "Glory unto God in the highest", and unto men that deserve, but not to such an undeserving one like me. Here, "The servant is *not* worthy of the hire"; and a Fakir, especially, has no right to any praise whatsoever, for would you praise your servant for simply doing his duty?

. . . My unbounded gratitude to Pandit Sundarlalji, and to my Professor[2] for this kind remembrance of me.

Now I would tell you something else. The Hindu mind was ever deductive and never synthetic or inductive. In all our philosophies, we always find hair-splitting arguments, taking for granted some general proposition, but the proposition itself may be as childish as possible. Nobody ever asked or searched the truth of these general propositions. Therefore, independent thought we have almost none to speak of, and hence the dearth of those sciences[3] which are the results of observation and generalization. And why was it thus? From two causes: The tremendous heat of the climate forcing us to love rest and contemplation better than activity, and the Brâhmins as priests never undertaking journeys or voyages to distant lands. There were voyagers and people who travelled far; but they were almost always traders, i.e. people from whom priestcraft and their own sole love for gain had taken away all capacity for intellectual development. So their observations, instead of adding to the store of human knowledge, rather degenerated it. For, their observations were bad, and their accounts exaggerated and tortured into fantastical shapes, until they passed all recognition.

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[1] Pandit Shankarlal of Khetri.

[2] With whom he read the *Mahâ-Bhâshya* on Panini.

[3] In later days he acknowledged that India gave birth to many sciences, though they developed elsewhere.

So you see, we must travel, we must go to foreign parts. We must see how the engine of society works in other countries, and keep free and open communication with what is going on in the minds of other nations, if we really want to be a nation again. And over and above all, we must cease to tyrannise. To what a ludicrous state are we brought! If a Bhângi comes to anybody as a Bhangi, he would be shunned as the plague; but no sooner does he get a cupful of water poured upon his head with some mutterings of prayers by a Pâdri, and get a coat on his back, no matter how threadbare, and come into the room of the most orthodox Hindu—I don't see the man who then dare refuse him a chair and a hearty shake of the hands! Irony can go on further. And come and see what they, the Padris, are doing here in the Dakshin (South). They are converting the lower classes by lakhs; and in Travancore, the most priest-ridden country in India—where every bit of land is owned by the Brahmins, and the females (of lower castes), even of the *royal family*, hold it as high honour to live as the wives of the Brahmins —nearly one-fourth has become Christian! And I cannot blame them; what part have they in David and what in Jesse? When, when, O Lord, shall man be brother to man?

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

16

KHETRI,
May, 1893.

DEAR DEWANJI SAHEB,

Surely my letter had not reached you before you wrote to me. The perusal of your letter gave me both pleasure and pain simultaneously: pleasure, to see that I have the good fortune to be loved by a man of your heart, power, and position; and pain, to see that my motive has been misinterpreted throughout. Believe me, that I love you and respect you like a father and that my gratitude towards you and your family is surely unbounded. The fact is this. You may remember that I had from before a desire to go to Chicago. When at Madras, the people there of their own accord, in conjunction with H. H. of Mysore and Ramnad, made every arrangement to send me up. And you may also remember that between H. H. of Khetri and myself there are the closest ties of love. Well, I, as a matter of course, wrote to him that I was going to America. Now the Raja of Khetri thought in his love that I was bound to see him once before I departed, especially as the Lord has given him an heir to the throne and great rejoicings were going on here; and to make sure of my coming he sent his Private Secretary all the way to Madras to fetch me, and of course I was bound to come. In the meanwhile I telegraphed to your brother at Nadiad to know whether you were there, and, unfortunately, the answer I could not get; therefore, the Secretary, who, poor fellow, had suffered terribly for his master in going to and fro Madras and with his eye wholly on the fact that his master would be unhappy if we could not reach Khetri within the Jalsa (festival), bought tickets at once for Jaipur. On our way we met Mr. Ratilal who informed me that my wire was received and duly answered and that Mr. Viharidas was expecting me. Now it is for you to judge, whose duty it has been so long to deal even justice. What would or could I do in this connection? If I would have got down, I could not have reached in time for the Khetri rejoicings; on the other hand, my motives might be misinterpreted. But I know you and your brother's love for me, and I knew also that I would have to go back to Bombay in a few days on my way to Chicago. I thought that the best solution was to postpone my visit till my return. As for my feeling affronted at not being attended by your brothers, it is a new discovery of yours which I never even dreamt of; or, God knows, perhaps, you have become a thought-reader. Jokes apart, my dear Dewanji Saheb, I am the same frolicsome, mischievous but, I assure you, innocent boy you found me at Junagad, and my love for your noble self is the same or increased a hundredfold because I have had a mental comparison between yourself and the Dewans of nearly all the states in Dakshin, and the Lord be my witness how my tongue was fluent in your praise (although I know that my powers are quite inadequate to estimate your noble qualities) in every Southern court. If this be not a sufficient explanation, I implore you to pardon me as a father pardons a son, and let me not be haunted with the impression that I was ever ungrateful to one who was so good to me.

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. I depend on you to remove any misconception in the mind of your brother about my not getting down and that, even had I been the very devil, I could not forget their kindness and good offices for me.

As to the other two Swamis,[1] they were my Gurubhais (brother-disciples), who went to you last at Junagad; of them one is our leader. I met them after three years and we came together, as far as Abu and then I left them. If you wish, I can take them back to Nadiad on my way to Bombay. May the Lord shower his blessings on you and yours.

Yours,
V.

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[1] Swamis Brahmananda (Rakhal) and Turiyananda (Hari).

17

BOMBAY,
22nd May, 1893.

DEAR DEWANJI SAHEB,

Reached Bombay a few days ago and would start off in a few days. Your friend, the Baniya gentleman to whom you wrote for the house accommodation, writes to say that his house is already full of guests and some of them are ill and that he is very sorry he cannot accommodate me. After all, we have got a nice, airy place.

. . . The Private Secretary of H. H. of Khetri and I are now residing together, I cannot express my gratitude to him for his love and kindness to me. He is what they call a Tazimi Sardar in Rajputana, i.e., one of those whom the Rajas receive by rising from their seats. Still he is so simple, and sometimes his service for me makes me almost ashamed.

. . . Often and often, we see that the very best of men even are troubled and visited with tribulations in this world; it may be inexplicable; but it is also the experience of my life that the heart and core of everything here is good, that whatever may be the surface waves, deep down and underlying everything, there is an infinite basis of goodness and love; and so long as we do not reach that basis, we are troubled; but having once reached that zone of calmness, let winds howl and tempests rage. The house which is built on a rock of ages cannot shake. I thoroughly believe that a good, unselfish and holy man like you, whose whole life has been devoted to doing good to others, has already reached this basis of firmness which the Lord Himself has styled as "rest upon Brahman" in the Gita (II. 72).

May the blows you have received draw you closer to that Being Who is the only one to be loved here and hereafter, so that you may realize Him in everything past, present, and future, and find everything present or lost in Him and Him alone. Amen!

Yours affectionately
VIVEKANANDA.

18

BOMBAY,
23rd May, 1893.

DEAR BALAJI,[1]

"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Thus said the old Jewish saint when suffering the greatest calamities that could befall man, and he erred not. Herein lies the whole secret of Existence. Waves may roll over the surface and tempest rage, but deep down there is the stratum of infinite calmness, infinite peace, and infinite bliss. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." And why? Because it is during these moments of visitations when the heart is wrung by hands which never stop for the father's cries or the mother's wail, when under the load of sorrow, dejection, and despair, the world seems to be cut off from under our feet, and when the whole horizon seems to be nothing but an impenetrable sheet of misery and utter despair—that the internal eyes open, light flashes all on a sudden, the dream vanishes, and intuitively we come face to face with the grandest mystery in nature—Existence. Yes, then it is—when the load would be sufficient to sink a lot of frail vessels—that the man of genius, of strength, the hero, sees that infinite, absolute, ever-blissful Existence *per se*, that infinite Being who is called and worshipped under different names, in different climes. Then it is, the shackles that bind the soul down to this hole of misery break, as it were, for a time, and unfettered it rises and rises until it reaches the throne of the Lord, "Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest". Cease not, brother, to send up petitions day and night, cease not to say day and night—THY WILL BE DONE.

"Ours not to question why,
Ours but to do and die."

Blessed be Thy name, O Lord! And, Thy will be done. Lord, we know that we are to submit; Lord, we know that it is the Mother's hand that is striking, and "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak". There is, Father of Love, an agony at the heart which is fighting against that calm resignation which Thou teachest Give us strength, O Thou who sawest Thy whole family destroyed before Thine eyes, with Thine hands crossed on Thy breast. Come, Lord, Thou Great Teacher, who hast taught us that the soldier is only to obey and speak not. Come, Lord, come Arjuna's Charioteer, and teach me as Thou once taughtest him that resignation in *Thyself* is the highest end and aim of this life, so that with those great ones of old, I may also firmly and resignedly cry, Om Shri Krishnârpanamastu (let it all be dedicated to Shri Krishna).

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[1] D. R. Balaji Rao who had a domestic affliction.

May the Lord send you peace is the prayer day and night of

VIVEKANANDA.

19

YOKOHAMA,
10th July, 1893.

DEAR ALASINGA, BALAJI, G. G., BANKING CORPORATION, AND ALL MY MADRAS FRIENDS,

Excuse my not keeping you constantly informed of my movements. One is so busy every day, and especially myself who am quite new to the life of possessing things and taking care of them. That consumes so much of my energy. It is really an awful botheration.

From Bombay we reached Colombo. Our steamer remained in port for nearly the whole day, and we took the opportunity of getting off to have a look at the town. We drove through the streets, and the only thing I remember was a temple in which was a very gigantic Murti (image) of the Lord Buddha in a reclining posture, entering Nirvana. . . .

The next station was Penang, which is only a strip of land along the sea in the body of the Malaya Peninsula. The Malayas are all Mohammedans, and in old days were noted pirates and quite a dread to merchantmen. But now the leviathan guns of modern turreted battleships have forced the Malayas to look about for more peaceful pursuits. On our way from Penang to Singapore, we had glimpses of Sumatra with its high mountains, and the Captain pointed out to me several places as the favourite haunts of pirates in days gone by. Singapore is the capital of the Straits Settlements. It has a fine botanical garden with the most splendid collection of palms. The beautiful fan-like palm called the traveller's palm, grows here in abundance, and the bread-fruit tree everywhere. The celebrated mangosteen is as plentiful here as mangoes in Madras, but mango is nonpareil. The people here are not half so dark as the people of Madras, although so near the line. Singapore possesses a fine museum too.

Hong Kong next. You feel that you have reached China, the Chinese element predominates so much. All labour, all trade seems to be in their hands. And Hong Kong is real China. As soon as the steamer casts anchor, you are besieged with hundreds of Chinese boats to carry you to the land. These boats with two helms are rather peculiar. The boatman lives in the boat with his family. Almost always, the wife is at the helms, managing one with her hands and the other with one of her feet. And in ninety per cent of cases, you find a baby tied to her back, with the hands and feet of the little Chin left free. It is a quaint sight to see the little John Chinaman dangling very quietly from his mother's back, whilst she is now setting with might and main, now pushing heavy loads, or jumping with wonderful agility from boat to boat. And there is such a rush of boats and steam-launches coming in and going out. Baby John is every moment put into the risk of having his little head pulverized, pigtail and all; but he does not care a fig. This busy life seems to have no charm for him, and he is quite content to learn the anatomy of a bit of rice-cake given to him from time to time by the madly busy mother. The Chinese child is quite a philosopher and calmly goes to work at an age when your Indian boy can hardly crawl on all fours. He has learnt the philosophy of necessity too well. Their extreme poverty is one of the causes why the Chinese and the Indians have remained in a state of mummified civilization. To an ordinary

Hindu or Chinese, everyday necessity is too hideous to allow him to think of anything else.

Hong Kong is a very beautiful town. It is built on the slopes of hills and on the tops too, which are much cooler than the city. There is an almost perpendicular tramway going to the top of the hill, dragged by wire-rope and steam-power.

We remained three days at Hong Kong and went to see Canton, which is eighty miles up a river. The river is broad enough to allow the biggest steamers to pass through. A number of Chinese steamers ply between Hong Kong and Canton. We took passage on one of these in the evening and reached Canton early in the morning. What a scene of bustle and life! What an immense number of boats almost covering the waters! And not only those that are carrying on the trade, but hundreds of others which serve as houses to live in. And quite a lot of them so nice and big. In fact, they are big houses two or three storeys high, with verandahs running round and streets between and all floating!

We landed on a strip of ground given by the Chinese Government to foreigners to live in. Around us on both sides of the river for miles and miles is the big city—a wilderness of human beings, pushing, struggling, surging, roaring. But with all its population, all its activity, it is the dirtiest town I saw, not in the sense in which a town is called dirty in India, for as to that not a speck of filth is allowed by the Chinese to go waste; but because of the Chinaman, who has, it seems, taken a vow never to bathe! Every house is a shop, people living only on the top floor. The streets are very very narrow, so that you almost touch the shops on both sides as you pass. At every ten paces you find meat-stalls, and there are shops which sell cat's and dog's meat. Of course, only the poorest classes of Chinamen eat dog or cat.

The Chinese ladies can never be seen. They have got as strict a zenana as the Hindus of Northern India; only the women of the labouring classes can be seen. Even amongst these, one sees now and then a woman with feet smaller than those of your youngest child, and of course they cannot be said to walk, but hobble.

I went to see several Chinese temples. The biggest in

Canton is dedicated to the memory of the first Buddhistic Emperor and the five hundred first disciples of Buddhism. The central figure is of course Buddha, and next beneath Him is seated the Emperor, and ranging on both sides are the statues of the disciples, all beautifully carved out of wood.

From Canton I returned back to Hong Kong, and from thence to Japan. The first port we touched was Nagasaki. We landed for a few hours and drove through the town. What a contrast! The Japanese are one of the cleanliest people on earth. Everything is neat and tidy. Their streets are nearly all broad, straight, and regularly paved. Their little houses are cage-like, and their pine-covered evergreen little hills form the background of almost every town and village. The short-statured, fair-skinned, quaintly-dressed Japs, their movements, attitudes, gestures, everything is picturesque. Japan is the land of the picturesque! Almost every house has a garden at the back, very nicely laid out according to Japanese fashion with small shrubs, grass-plots, small artificial waters, and small stone bridges.

From Nagasaki to Kobe. Here I gave up the steamer and took the land-route to Yokohama, with a view to seeing the interior of Japan.

I have seen three big cities in the interior—Osaka, a great manufacturing town, Kyoto, the former capital, and Tokyo, the present capital. Tokyo is nearly twice the size of Calcutta with nearly double the population.

No foreigner is allowed to travel in the interior without a passport.

The Japanese seem now to have fully awakened themselves to the necessity of the present times. They have now a thoroughly organized army equipped with guns, which one of their own officers has invented, and which is said to be second to none. Then, they are continually increasing their navy. I have seen a tunnel nearly a mile long, bored by a Japanese engineer.

The match factories are simply a sight to see, and they are bent upon making everything they want in their own country. There is a Japanese line of steamers plying between China and Japan, which shortly intends running between Bombay and Yokohama.

I saw quite a lot of temples. In every temple there are some Sanskrit Mantras written in Old Bengali characters. Only a few of the priests know Sanskrit. But they are an intelligent sect. The modern race for progress has penetrated even the priesthood. I cannot write what I have in my mind about the Japs in one short letter. Only I want that numbers of our young men should pay a visit to Japan and China every year. Especially to the Japanese, India is still the dreamland of everything high and good. And you, what are you? . . . talking twaddle all your lives, vain talkers, what are you? Come, see these people, and then go and hide your faces in shame. A race of dotards, you lose your caste if you come out! Sitting down these hundreds of years with an ever-increasing load of crystallized superstition on your heads, for hundreds of years spending all your energy upon discussing the touchableness or untouchableness of this food or that, with all humanity crushed out of you by the continuous social tyranny of ages—what are you? And what are you doing now? . . . promenading the seashores with books in your hands—repeating undigested stray bits of European brainwork, and the whole soul bent upon getting a thirty-rupee clerkship, or at best becoming a lawyer—the height of young India's ambition—and every student with a whole brood of hungry children cackling at his heels and asking for bread! Is there not water enough in the sea to drown you, books, gowns, university diplomas, and all?

Come, be men! Kick out the priests who are always against progress, because they would never mend, their hearts would never become big. They are the offspring of centuries of superstition and tyranny. Root out priestcraft first. Come, be men! Come out of your narrow holes and have a look abroad. See how nations are on the march! Do you love man? Do you love your country? Then come, let us struggle for higher and better things; look not back, no not even if you see the dearest and nearest cry. Look not back, but forward!

India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men—men, mind, and not brutes. The English Government has been the instrument, brought over here by the Lord, to break your crystallized civilization, and Madras supplied the first men who helped in giving the English a footing. How many men, unselfish, thorough-going men, is Madras ready now to supply, to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor—and bread to their hungry mouths—enlightenment to the people at large—and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts, by the tyranny of your forefathers?

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Calm and silent and steady work, and no newspaper humbug, no name-making you must always remember.

V.

20

BREEZY MEADOWS,
METCALF, MASS.,
20th August, 1893.

DEAR ALASINGA,

Received your letter yesterday. Perhaps you have by this time got my letter from Japan. From Japan I reached Vancouver. The way was by the Northern Pacific. It was very cold and I suffered much for want of warm clothing. However, I reached Vancouver anyhow, and thence went through Canada to Chicago. I remained about twelve days in Chicago. And almost every day I used to go to the Fair. It is a tremendous affair. One must take at least ten days to go through it. The lady, to whom Varada Rao introduced me, and her husband belong to the highest Chicago society, and they were so very kind to me. I took my departure from Chicago and came to Boston. Mr. Lâlubhâi was with me up to Boston. He was very kind to me. . . .

The expense I am bound to run into here is awful. You remember, you gave me £178 in notes and £9 in cash. It has come down to £130 in all !! On an average it costs me £1 every day, a cigar costs eight annas of our money. The Americans are so rich that they spend money like water and by forced legislation keep up the price of everything so high that no other nation on earth can approach it. Every common coolie earns nine or ten rupees a day and spends them. All those rosy ideas we had before starting have melted, and I have now to fight against impossibilities. A hundred times I had a mind to go out of the country and go back to India. But I am determined, and I have a call from Above. I see no way, but His eyes see. And I must stick to my guns, life or death. . . .

Just now I am living as the guest of an old lady in a village near Boston. I accidentally made her acquaintance in the railway train, and she invited me to come over and live with her. I have an advantage in living with her, in saving for some time my expenditure of £1 per day, and she has the advantage of inviting her friends over here and showing them a curio from India! And all this must be borne. Starvation, cold, hooting in the streets on account of my quaint dress, these are what I have to fight against. But, my dear boy, no great things were ever done without great labour.

. . . Know, then, that this is the land of Christians, and any other influence than that is almost zero. Nor do I care a bit for the enmity of any—ists in the world. I am here amongst the children of the Son of Mary, and the Lord Jesus will help me. They like much the broad views of Hinduism and my love for the Prophet of Nazareth. I tell them that I preach nothing against the Great One of Galilee. I only ask the Christians to take in the Great Ones of Ind along with the Lord Jesus, and they appreciate it.

Winter is approaching, and I shall have to get all sorts of warm clothing, and we require more warm clothing than the natives. . . . Look sharp, my boy, take courage. We are destined by the Lord to do great things in India. Have faith. We will do. We, the poor and the despised, who really feel, and not those. . . .

In Chicago, the other day, a funny thing happened. The Raja of Kapurthala was here, and he was being lionized by some portion of Chicago society. I once met the Raja in the Fair grounds, but he was too big to speak with a poor fakir. There was an eccentric Mahratta Brâhmin selling nail-made pictures in the Fair, dressed in a dhoti. This fellow told the reporters all sorts of things against the Raja——, that he was a man of low caste, that those Rajas were nothing but slaves, and that they generally led immoral lives, etc., etc. And these truthful (?) editors for which America is famous, wanted to give to the boy's stories some weight; and so the next day they wrote huge columns in their papers about the description of a man of wisdom from India, meaning me—extolling me to the skies, and putting all sorts of words in my mouth, which I never even dreamt of, and ascribing to me all those remarks made by the Mahratta Brahmin about the Raja of Kapurthala. And it was such a good brushing that Chicago society gave up the Raja in hot haste. . . . These newspaper editors made capital out of me to give my countryman a brushing. That shows, however, that in this country intellect carries more weight than all the pomp of money and title.

Yesterday Mrs. Johnson, the lady superintendent of the women's prison, was here. They don't call it prison but reformatory here. It is the grandest thing I have seen in America. How the inmates are benevolently treated, how they are reformed and sent back as useful members of society; how grand, how beautiful, you must see to believe! And, oh, how my heart ached to think of what we think of the poor, the low, in India. They have no chance, no escape, no way to climb up. The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends, no help—they cannot rise, try however they may. They sink lower and lower every day, they feel the blows showered upon them by a cruel society and they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men. And the result is slavery. Thoughtful people within the last few years have seen it, but unfortunately laid it at the door of the Hindu religion, and to them, the only way of bettering is by crushing this grandest religion of the world. Hear me, my friend, I have discovered the secret through the grace of the Lord. Religion is not in fault. On the other hand, your religion teaches you that every being is only your own self multiplied. But it was the want of practical application, the want of sympathy—the want of heart. The Lord once more came to you as Buddha and taught you how to feel, how to sympathise with the poor, the miserable, the sinner, but you heard Him not. Your priests invented the horrible story that the Lord was here for deluding demons with false doctrines! True indeed, but we are the demons, not those that believed. And just as the Jews denied the Lord Jesus and are since that day wandering over the world as homeless beggars, tyrannized over by everybody, so you are bond-slaves to any nation that thinks it worth while to rule over you. Ah, tyrants! you do not know that the obverse is tyranny, and the reverse slavery. The slave and the tyrant are synonymous.

Balaji and G. G. may remember one evening at Pondicherry—we were discussing the matter of sea-voyage with a Pundit, and I shall always remember his brutal gestures and his Kadâpi Na (never)! They do not know that India is a very small part of the world, and the whole world looks down with contempt upon the three hundred millions of earthworms crawling upon the fair soil of India and trying to oppress each other. This state of things must be removed, not by destroying religion but by following the great teachings of the Hindu faith, and joining with it the wonderful sympathy of that logical development of Hinduism—Buddhism.

A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up—the gospel of equality.

No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism. The Lord has shown me that religion is not in fault, but it is the Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism, hypocrites, who invent all sorts of engines of tyranny in the shape of doctrines of Pâramârthika and Vyâvahârika.

Despair not! Remember the Lord says in the Gita, "To work you have the right, but not to the result". Gird up your loins, my boy. I am called by the Lord for this. I have been dragged through a whole life full of crosses and tortures; I have seen the nearest and dearest die, almost of starvation; I have been ridiculed, distrusted, and have suffered for my sympathy for the very men who scoff and scorn. Well, my boy, this is the school of misery, which is also the school for great souls and prophets for the cultivation of sympathy, of patience, and, above all, of an indomitable iron will which quakes not even if the universe be pulverized at our feet. I pity them. It is not their fault. They are children, yea, veritable children, though they be great and high in society. Their eyes see nothing beyond their little horizon of a few yards—the routine-work, eating, drinking, earning, and begetting, following each other in mathematical precision. They know nothing beyond—happy little souls! Their sleep is never disturbed, their nice little brown studies of lives never rudely shocked by the wail of woe, of misery, of degradation and poverty, that has filled the Indian atmosphere—the result of centuries of oppression. They little dream of the ages of tyranny, mental, moral, and physical, that has reduced the image of God to a mere beast of burden; the emblem of the Divine Mother, to a slave to bear children; and life itself, a curse. But there are others who see, feel, and shed tears of blood in their hearts, who think that there is a remedy for it, and who are ready to apply this remedy at any cost, even to the giving up of life. And "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven". Is it not then natural, my friends, that they have no time to look down from their heights to the vagaries of these contemptible little insects, ready every moment to spit their little venoms?

Trust not to the so-called rich, they are more dead than alive. The hope lies in you—in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful. Have faith in the Lord; no policy, it is nothing. Feel for the miserable and look up for help—it *shall come*. I have travelled twelve years with this load in my heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from door to door of the so-called rich and great. With a bleeding heart I have crossed half the world to this strange land, seeking for help. The Lord is great. I know He will help me. I may perish of cold or hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed. Go now this minute to the temple of Pârthasârathi,[1] and before Him who was friend to the poor and lowly cowherds of Gokula, who never shrank to embrace the Pariah Guhaka, who accepted the invitation of a prostitute in preference to that of the nobles and saved her in His incarnation as Buddha—year, down on your faces before Him and make a great sacrifice, the sacrifice of a whole life for them, for whom He comes from time to time, whom He loves above all, the poor, the lowly, the oppressed. Vow, then, to devote your whole lives to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions, going down and down every day.

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[1] Shri Krishna as Sârathi or charioteer of Pârtha or Arjuna.

It is not the work of a day, and the path is full of the most deadly thorns. But Parthasarathi is ready to be our Sârathi; we know that; and in His name and with eternal faith in Him, set fire to the mountain of misery that has been heaped upon India for ages—and it shall be burnt down. Come then, look it in the face, brethren, it is a grand task and we are so low. But we are the sons of Light and children of God. Glory unto the Lord, we will succeed. Hundreds will fall in the struggle, hundreds will be ready to take it up. I may die here unsuccessful, another will take up the task. You know the disease, you know the remedy, only have faith. Do not look up to the so-called rich and great; do not care for the heartless intellectual writers, and their cold-blooded newspaper articles. Faith, sympathy—fiery faith and fiery sympathy! Life is nothing, death is nothing, hunger nothing, cold nothing. Glory unto the Lord—march on, the Lord is our General. Do not look back to see who falls—forward—onward! Thus and thus we shall go on, brethren. One falls, and another takes up the work.

From this village I am going to Boston tomorrow. I am going to speak at a big Ladies' Club here, which is helping Ramâbâi. I must first go and buy some clothing in Boston. If I am to live longer here, my quaint dress will not do. People gather by hundreds in the streets to see me. So what I want is to dress myself in a long black coat, and keep a red robe and turban to wear when I lecture. This is what the ladies advise me to do, and they are the rulers here, and I must have their sympathy. Before you get this letter, my money would come down to somewhat about £70 or £60. So try your best to send some money. It is necessary to remain here for some time to have any influence here. I could not see the phonograph for Mr. Bhattacharya as I got his letter here. If I go to Chicago again, I will look for them. I do not know whether I shall go back to Chicago or not. My friends there write me to represent India. And the gentleman, to whom Varada Rao introduced me, is one of the directors of the Fair; but then I refused as I would have to spend all my little stock of money in remaining more than a month in Chicago.

In America, there are no classes in the railway except in Canada. So I have to travel first-class, as that is the only class; but I do not venture in the Pullmans. They are very comfortable—you sleep, eat, drink, even bathe in them, just as if you were in a hotel—but they are too expensive.

It is very hard work getting into society and making yourself heard. Now nobody is in the towns, they are all away in summer places. They will all come back in winter. Therefore I must wait. After such a struggle I am not going to give up easily. Only try your best to help me as much as you can; and even if you cannot, I must try to the end, and even if I die of cold or disease or hunger here, you take up the task. Holiness, sincerity, and faith! I have left instructions with Cooks to forward any letter or money to me wherever I am. Rome was not built in a day. If you can keep me here for six months at least, I hope everything will come right. In the meantime I am trying my best to find any plank I can float upon. And if I find out any means to support myself, I shall wire to you immediately.

First I will try in America; and if I fail, try in England; if I fail, go back to India and wait for further commands from High. Ramdas's father has gone to England. He is in a hurry to go home. He is a very good man at heart, only the Baniya roughness on the surface. It would take more than twenty days for the letter to reach. Even now it is so cold in New England that every day we have fires night and morning. Canada is still colder. I never saw snow on such low hills as there.

Gradually I can make my way: but that means a longer residence in this horribly expensive country. Just now the raising of the Rupee in India has created a panic in this country, and lots of mills have been stopped. So I cannot hope for anything just now, but I must wait.

Just now I have been to the tailor and ordered some winter clothings, and that would cost at least Rs. 300 and up. And still it would not be good clothes, only decent. Ladies here are very particular about a man's dress, and they are the power in this country. They . . . never fail the missionaries. They are helping our Ramabai every year. If you fail in keeping me here, send some money to get me out of the country. In the meantime if anything turns out in my favour, I will write or wire. A word costs Rs. 4 in cable!

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

21

SALEM,
Saturday, Sept. 4, 1893

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI[1] (honourable professor),

I hasten to tender my heartfelt gratitude to you for your letters of introduction. I have received a letter from Mr. Theles of Chicago giving me the names of some of the delegates and other things about the Congress.

Your professor of Sanskrit in his note to Miss Sanborn mistakes me for Purushottam Joshi and states that there is a Sanskrit library in Boston the like of which can scarcely be met with in India. I would be so happy to see it.

Mr. Sanborn has written to me to come over to Saratoga on Monday, and I am going accordingly. I would stop then at a boarding house called Sanatorium. If any news come from Chicago in the meanwhile, I hope you will kindly send it over to the Sanatorium, Saratoga.

You and your noble wife and sweet children have made an impression in my brain which is simply indelible, and I thought myself so much near to heaven when living with you. May He, the giver of all gifts, shower on your head His choicest blessings.

Here are a few lines written as an attempt at poetry. Hoping your love will pardon this infliction.

Ever your friend,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] Prof. J. H. Wright of Boston who introduced Swami Vivekananda to the Parliament of Religions.

O'er Hill and dale and mountain range,
In temple, church, and mosque,
In Vedas, Bible, Al Koran
I had searched for Thee in vain.

Like a child in the wildest forest lost
I have cried and cried alone,
"Where art Thou gone, my God, my love?"
The echo answered, "gone".

And days and nights and years then passed
A fire was in the brain;
I knew not when day changed in night
The heart seemed rent in twain.
I laid me down on Gangâ's shore,
Exposed to sun and rain;
With burning tears I laid the dust
And wailed with waters' roar.

I called on all the holy names
Of every clime and creed.
"Show me the way, in mercy, ye
Great ones who have reached the goal."

Years then passed in bitter cry,
Each moment seemed an age,
Till one day midst my cries and groans
Some one seemed calling me.

A gentle soft and soothing voice
That said "my son", "my son",
That seemed to thrill in unison
With all the chords of my soul.

I stood on my feet and tried to find
The place the voice came from;
I searched and searched and turned to see
Round me, before, behind.
Again, again it seemed to speak
The voice divine to me.
In rapture all my soul was hushed,
Entranced, enthralled in bliss.

A flash illumined all my soul;
The heart of my heart opened wide.
O joy, O bliss, what do I find!
My love, my love you are here
And you are here, my love, my all!

And I was searching thee—
From all eternity you were there
Enthroned in majesty!
From that day forth, where ere I roam,
I feel Him standing by
O'er hill and dale, high mount and vale,
Far far away and high.

The moon's soft light, the stars so bright,
The glorious orb of day,
He shines in them; His beauty—might—
Reflected lights are they.
The majestic morn, the melting eve,
The boundless billowy sea,
In nature's beauty, songs of birds,
I see through them—it is He.

When dire calamity seizes me,
The heart seems weak and faint,
All nature seems to crush me down,

With laws that never bend.
Meseems I hear Thee whispering sweet
My love, "I am near", "I am near".
My heart gets strong. With thee, my love,
A thousand deaths no fear.
Thou speakest in the mother's lay
That shuts the babies eye;
When innocent children laugh and play,
I see Thee standing by.

When holy friendship shakes the hand,
He stands between them too;
He pours the nectar in mother's kiss
And the baby's sweet "mama".
Thou wert my God with prophets old,
All creeds do come from Thee;
The Vedas, Bible, and Koran bold
Sing Thee in harmony.

"Thou art", "Thou art" the Soul of souls
In the rushing stream of life.
"Om tat Sat om."[1] Thou art my God.
My love, I am thine, I am thine.

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[1] Tat Sat means that only real existence. [Swamiji's note].

22

Chicago,
2nd October, '93.

Dear Adhyapakji,

I do not know what you are thinking of my long silence. In the first place I dropped in on the Congress in the eleventh hour, and quite unprepared, and that kept me very very busy for some time. Secondly, I was speaking almost every day in the Congress and had no time to write; and last and greatest of all—my kind friend, I owe so much to you that it would have been an insult to your *ahetuka* (unselfish) friendship to have written you business-like letters in a hurry. The Congress is now over.

Dear brother, I was so, so afraid to stand before that great assembly of fine speakers and thinkers from all over the world and speak; but the Lord gave me strength, and I almost every day heroically (?) faced the platform and the audience. If I have done well, He gave me the strength for it; if I have miserably failed—I knew that beforehand—for I am hopelessly ignorant.

Your friend Prof. Bradley was very kind to me and he always cheered me on. And oh! everybody is so kind here to me who am nothing—that it is beyond my power of expression. Glory unto Him in the highest in whose sight the poor ignorant monk from India is the same as the learned divines of this mighty land. And how the Lord is helping me every day of my life, brother—I sometimes wish for a life of million million ages to serve Him through the work, dressed in rags and fed by charity.

Oh, how I wished that you were here to see some of our sweet ones from India—the tender-hearted Buddhist Dhammapala, the orator Mazoomdar—and realize that in the far-off and poor India there are hearts that beat in sympathy to yours, born and brought up in this mighty and great country.

My eternal respects to your holy wife; and to your sweet children my eternal love and blessings.

Col. Higginson, a very broad man, told me that your daughter has written to his daughter about me; and he was very sympathetic to me. I am going to Evanston tomorrow and hope to see Prof. Bradley there.

May He make us all more and more pure and holy so that we may live a perfect spiritual life even before throwing off this earthly body.

VIVEKANANDA.

[The letter continues on a separate sheet of paper:]

I am now going to be reconciled to my life here. All my life I have been taking every circumstance as coming from Him, and I calmly adapt myself to it. At first in America I was almost out of my water. I was afraid I would have to give up the accustomed way of being guided by the Lord and *cater* for myself—and what a horrid piece of mischief and ingratitude was that! I now clearly see that He who was guiding me on the snow tops of the Himalayas and the burning plains of India is here to help me and guide me. *Glory unto Him* in the highest. So I have calmly fallen in my old ways. Somebody or other gives me a shelter and food, somebody or other comes to ask me to speak about Him, and I know He sends them and mine is to obey. And then He is supplying my necessities, and His *will be done*!

"He who rests [in] Me and gives up all other self-assertion and struggles I carry to him whatever he needs" (Gitâ).

So it is in Asia. So in Europe. So in America. So in the deserts of India. So in the rush of business in America. For is He not here also? And if He does not, I only would take for granted that He wants that I should lay aside this three minutes' body of clay—and I hope to lay it down gladly.

We may or may not meet brother. He knows. You are great, learned, and holy. I dare not preach to you or your wife; but to your children I quote these passages from the Vedas—

"The four Vedas, sciences, language, philosophy, and all other learnings are only ornamental. The real learning, the true knowledge, is that which enables us to reach Him who is unchangeable in His love."

"How real, how tangible, how visible is He through whom the skin touches, the eyes see, and the world gets its reality!"

"Hearing Him nothing remains to be heard,
Seeing Him nothing remains to be seen,
Attaining Him nothing remains to be attained."

"He is the eye of our eyes, the ear of our ears, the Soul of our souls."

He is nearer to you, my dears, than even your father and mother. You are innocent and pure as flowers. Remain so, and He will reveal Himself unto you. Dear Austin, when you are playing, there is another playmate playing with you who loves you more than anybody else; and Oh, He is so full of fun. He is always playing—sometimes with great big balls which we call the sun and earth, sometimes with little children like you and laughing and playing with you.

How funny it would be to see Him and play with Him! My dear, think of it.

Dear Adhyapakji, I am moving about just now. Only when I come to Chicago, I always go to see Mr. and Mrs. Lyon, one of the noblest couples I have seen here. If you would be kind enough to write to me, kindly address it to the care of Mr. John B. Lyon, 262 Michigan Ave., Chicago.

"He who gets hold of the One in this world of many—the one constant existence in a world of flitting shadows—the one life in a world of death—he alone crosses this sea of misery and struggle. None else, none else" (Vedas).

"He who is the Brahman of the Vedântins, Ishvara of the Naiyâyikas, Purusha of the Sânkhyas, *cause* of the Mimâmsakas, *law* of the Buddhists, *absolute zero* of the Atheists, and love infinite unto those that love, may [He] take us all under His merciful protection"—Udayanâchârya, a great philosopher of the Nyâya or Dualistic school. And this is the Benediction pronounced at the very beginning of his wonderful book, *Kusumânjali* (A handful of flowers) in which He attempts to establish the existence of a personal creator and moral ruler of infinite love independently of revelation.

Yours, ever grateful friend,
VIVEKANANDA.

23

C/o. J. Lyon,
262 Michigan Avenue, Chicago,
26th October, '93.

Dear Adhyapakji,

You would be glad to know that I am doing well here and that almost everybody has been very kind to me, except of course, the very orthodox. Many of the men brought together here from far-off lands have got projects and ideas and missions to carry out, and America is the only place where there is a chance of success for everything. But I thought better and have given up speaking about my project entirely—because I am sure now—the heathen draws more than his project. So I want to go to work earnestly for my own project only keeping the project in the background and working like any other lecturer.

He who has brought me hither and has not left me yet will not leave me ever I am here. You will be glad to know that I am doing well and expect to do very well in the way of getting money. Of course I am too green in the business but would soon learn my trade. I am very popular in Chicago. So I want to stay here a little more and get *money*.

Tomorrow I am going to lecture on Buddhism at the ladies' fortnightly club—which is the most influential in this city. How to thank you my kind friend or Him who brought you to me—for now I think the success of my project probable, and it is you who have made it so.

May blessings and happiness attend every step of your progress in this world.

My love and blessings to your children.

Yours affly. ever,
Vivekananda.

24

CHICAGO,
2nd November, 1893.

DEAR ALASINGA,

I am so sorry that a moment's weakness on my part should cause you so much trouble; I was out of pocket at that time. Since then the Lord sent me friends. At a village near Boston, I made the acquaintance of Dr. Wright, Professor of Greek in the Harvard University. He sympathized with me very much and urged upon me the necessity of going to the Parliament of Religions, which he thought would give me an introduction to the nation. As I was not acquainted with anybody, the Professor undertook to arrange everything for me, and eventually I came back to Chicago. Here I, together with the oriental and occidental delegates to the Parliament of Religions, were all lodged in the house of a gentleman.

On the morning of the opening of the Parliament, we all assembled in a building called the Art Palace, where one huge, and other smaller temporary halls were erected for the sittings of the Parliament. Men from all nations were there. From India were Mazoomdar of the Brâhmo Samâj, and Nagarkar of Bombay, Mr. Gandhi representing the Jains, and Mr. Chakravarti representing Theosophy with Mrs. Annie Besant. Of these, Mazoomdar and I were, of course, old friends, and Chakravarti knew me by name. There was a grand procession, and we were all marshalled on to the platform. Imagine a hall below and a huge gallery above, packed with six or seven thousand men and women representing the best culture of the country, and on the platform learned men of all the nations of the earth. And I, who never spoke in public in my life, to address this august assemblage!! It was opened in great form with music and ceremony and speeches; then the delegates were introduced one by one, and they stepped up and spoke. Of course my heart was fluttering and my tongue nearly dried up; I was so nervous and could not venture to speak in the morning. Mazoomdar, made a nice speech. Chakravarti a nicer one, and they were much applauded. They were all prepared and came with ready-made speeches. I was a fool and had none, but bowed down to Devi Sarasvati and stepped up, and Dr. Barrows introduced me. I made a short speech. I addressed the assembly as "Sisters and Brothers of America", a deafening applause of two minutes followed, and then I proceeded, and when it was finished, I sat down, almost exhausted with emotion. The next day all the papers announced that my speech was the hit of the day, and I became known to the whole of America. Truly has it been said by the great commentator Shridhara— मूकं करोति वाचालं— "Who maketh the dumb a fluent speaker." His name be praised! From that day I became a celebrity, and the day I read my paper on Hinduism, the hall was packed as it had never been before. I quote to you from one of the papers: "Ladies, ladies, ladies packing every place—filling every corner, they patiently waited and waited while the papers that separated them from Vivekananda were read", etc. You would be astonished if I sent over to you the newspaper cuttings, but you already know that I am a hater of celebrity. Suffice it to say, that whenever I went on the platform a deafening applause would be raised for me. Nearly all the papers paid high tributes to me, and even the most bigoted had to admit that "This man with his handsome face and magnetic presence and wonderful oratory is the most prominent figure in the Parliament", etc., etc. Sufficient for you to know that never before did an Oriental make such an impression on American society.

And how to speak of their kindness? I have no more wants now, I am well off, and all the money that I require to visit Europe I shall get from here. . . . A boy called Narasimhâchârya has cropped up in our midst. He has been loafing about the city for the last three years. Loafing or no loafing, I like him; but please write to me all about him, if you know anything. He knows you. He came in the year of the Paris Exhibition to Europe. . . .

I am now out of want. Many of the handsomest houses in this city are open to me. All the time I am living as a guest of somebody or other. There is a curiosity in this nation, such as you meet with nowhere else. They want to know everything, and their women—they are the most advanced in the world. The average American woman is far more cultivated than the average American man. The men slave all their life for money, and the women snatch every opportunity to improve themselves. And they are a very kind-hearted, frank people. Everybody who has a fad to preach comes here, and I am sorry to say that most of these are not sound. The Americans have their faults too, and what nation has not? But this is my summing up: Asia laid the germs of civilization, Europe developed man, and America is developing the woman and the masses. It is the paradise of the woman and the labourer. Now contrast the American masses and women with ours, and you get the idea at once. The Americans are fast becoming liberal. Judge them not by the specimens of *hard-shelled Christians* (it is their own phrase) that you see in India. There are those here too, but their number is decreasing rapidly, and this great nation is progressing fast towards that spirituality which is the standard boast of the Hindu.

The Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow. All the reformers in India made the serious mistake of holding religion accountable for all the horrors of priestcraft and degeneration, and went forthwith to pull down the indestructible structure, and what was the result? Failure! Beginning from Buddha down to Ram Mohan Roy, everyone made the mistake of holding caste to be a religious institution and tried to pull down religion and caste all together, and failed. But in spite of all the ravings of the priests, caste is simply a crystallized social institution, which after doing its service is now filling the atmosphere of India with its stench, and it can only be removed by giving back to the people their lost social individuality. Every man born here knows that he is a *man*. Every man born in India know that he is a slave of society. Now, freedom is the only condition of growth; take that off, the result is degeneration. With the introduction of modern competition, see how caste is disappearing fast! No religion is now necessary to kill it. The Brâhmana shopkeeper, shoemaker, and wine-distiller are common in Northern India. And why? Because of competition. No man is prohibited from doing anything he pleases for his livelihood under the present government, and the result is neck and neck competition, and thus thousands are seeking and finding the highest level they were born for, instead of vegetating at the bottom.

I must remain in this country at least through the winter, and then go to Europe. The Lord will provide everything for me. You need not disturb yourself about it. I cannot express my gratitude for your love.

Day by day I am feeling that the Lord is with me, and I am trying to follow His direction. His will be done. . . . We will do great things for the world, and that for the sake of doing good and not for name and fame.

"Ours not to reason why, ours but to do and die." Be of good cheer and believe that we are selected by the Lord to do great things, and we will do them. Hold yourself in readiness, i.e. be pure and holy, and love for love's sake. Love the poor, the miserable, the downtrodden, and the Lord will bless you.

See R——and others from time to time, and urge them to sympathize with the masses of India. Tell them how they are standing on the neck of the poor, and that they are not fit to be called men if they do not try to raise them up. Be fearless, the Lord is with you, and He will yet raise the starving and ignorant millions of India. A railway porter here is better educated than many of your young men and most of your princes. Every American woman has far better education than can be conceived of by the majority of Hindu women. Why cannot we have the same education? We must.

Think not that you are poor; money is not power, but goodness, holiness. Come and see how it is so all over the world.

Yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. By the bye, your uncle's paper was the most curious phenomenon I ever saw. It was like a tradesman's catalogue, and it was not thought fit to be read in the Parliament. So Narasimhacharya read a few extracts from it in a side hall and nobody understood a word of it. Do not tell him of it. It is a great art to press the largest amount of thought into the smallest number of words. Even Manilal Dvivedi's paper had to be cut very short. More than a thousand papers were read, and there was no time to give to such wild perorations. I had a good long time given to me over the ordinary half hour, . . . because the most popular speakers were always put down last, to hold the audience. And Lord bless them, what sympathy they have, and what patience! They would sit from ten o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock at night—only a recess of half an hour for a meal, and paper after paper read, most of them very trivial, but they would wait and wait to hear their favourites.

Dhammapâla of Ceylon was one of the favourites. But unfortunately he was not a good speaker. He had only quotations from Max Müller and Rhys Davids to give them. He is a very sweet man, and we became very intimate during the Parliament.

A Christian lady from Poona, Miss Sorabji, and the Jain representative, Mr. Gandhi, are going to remain longer in the country and make lecture tours. I hope they will succeed. Lecturing is a very profitable occupation in this country and sometimes pays well.

Mr. Ingersoll gets five to six hundred dollars a lecture. He is the most celebrated lecturer in this country. Do not publish this letter. After reading send it to the Maharaja (of Khetri). I have sent him my photograph in America.

25

CHICAGO,
15th November, 1894(3?)

DEAR DEWANJI SAHEB,

I here received your kind note. So very kind of you to remember me even here. I have not seen your Narayan Hemchandra. He is not in America, I believe. I have seen many strange sights and grand things. I am glad that there is a good chance of your coming over to Europe. Avail yourself of it by any means. The fact of our isolation from all the other nations of the world is the cause of our degeneration and its only remedy is getting back into the current of the rest of the world. Motion is the sign of life. America is a grand country. It is a paradise of the poor and women. There is almost no poor in the country, and nowhere else in the world women are so free, so educated, so cultured. They are everything in society.

This is a great lesson. The Sannyasin has not lost a bit of his Sannyasiship, even his mode of living. And in this most hospitable country, every home is open to me. The Lord who guides me in India, would He not guide me here? And He has.

You may not understand why a Sannyasin should be in America. But it was necessary, because the only claim you have to be recognized by the world is your religion, and good specimens of our religious men are required to be sent abroad to give other nations an idea that India is not dead.

Some representative men must come out of India and go to all the nations of the earth to show at least that you are not savages. You may not feel the necessity of it from your Indian home, but, believe me, much depends upon that for your nation. And a Sannyasin who has no idea of doing good to his fellows is a brute, not a Sannyasin.

I am neither a sightseer nor an idle traveller; but you will see, if you live to see, and bless me all your life.

Mr. Dvivedi's papers were too big for the Parliament, and they had to be cut short.

I spoke at the Parliment of Religions, and with what effect I may quote to you from a few newspapers and magazines ready at hand. I need not be self-conceited, but to you in confidence I am bound to say, because of your love, that no Hindu made such an impression in America, and if my coming has done nothing it has done this that the Americans have come to know that India even today produces men at whose feet even the most civilized nations may learn lessons of religion and morality. Don't you think that is enough to say for the Hindu nation sending over here their Sannyasin? You would hear the details from Virchand Gandhi.

These I quote from the journals: "But eloquent as were many of the brief speeches, no one expressed as well the spirit of the Parliament (of religions) and its limitations as the Hindu monk. I copy his address in full, but I can only suggest its effect upon the audience; for he is an orator by Divine right and his strong intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than these earnest words and the rich rhythmical utterance he gave them." (Here the speech is quoted *in extenso*)—*New York Critique*.

"He has preached in clubs and churches until his faith has become familiar to us. . . . His culture, his eloquence, and his fascinating personality have given us *a new idea of Hindu civilization*. . . . His fine, intelligent face and his deep musical voice, prepossessing one at once in his favour. . . . He speaks without notes, presenting his facts and his conclusions with the greatest art and the most convincing sincerity, and rising often to rich inspiring eloquence." *Ibid.*

"Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him, we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation." *Herald* (the greatest paper here).

I cease from quoting more lest you think me conceited; but this was necessary to you who have become nearly frogs in the well and would not see how the world is going on elsewhere. I do not mean you personally, my noble friend, but our nation in general.

I am the same here as in India, only here in this highly cultural land there is an appreciation, a sympathy which our ignorant fools never dream of. There our people grudge us monks a crumb of bread, here they are ready to pay one thousand rupees a lecture and remain grateful for the instructions for ever.

I am appreciated by these strangers more than I was ever in India. I can, if I will, live here all my life in the greatest luxury; but I am a Sannyasin, and "India, with all thy faults I love thee still". So I am coming back after some months, and go on sowing the seeds of religion and progress from city to city as I was doing so long, although amongst a people who know not what appreciation and gratefulness are.

I am ashamed of my own nation when I compare their beggarly, selfish, unappreciative, ignorant ungratefulness with the help, hospitality, sympathy, and respect which the Americans have shown to me, a representative of a foreign religion. Therefore come out of the country, see others and compare.

Now after these quotations do you think it was worth while to send a Sannyasin to America?

Please do not publish it. I hate notoriety in the same manner as I did in India.

I am doing the Lord's work, and wherever He leads I follow. मूकं करोति वाचालं etc.—He who makes the dumb eloquent and the lame cross a mountain. He will help me. I do not care for human help. He is ready to help me in India, in America, on the North Pole, if He thinks fit. If He does not, none else can help me. Glory unto the Lord for ever and ever.

Yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

26

C/o GEORGE W. HALE, ESQ.
541 DEARBORN AVENUE, CHICAGO,
28th December, 1893.

DEAR HARIPADA,[1]

It is very strange that news of my Chicago lectures has appeared in the Indian paper; for whatever I do, I try my best to avoid publicity. Many things strike me here. It may be fairly said that there is no poverty in this country. I have never seen women elsewhere as cultured and educated as they are here. Well-educated men there are in our country, but you will scarcely find anywhere women like those here. It is indeed true, that "the Goddess Herself lives in the houses of virtuous men as Lakshmi". I have seen thousands of women here whose hearts are as pure and stainless as snow. Oh, how free they are! It is they who control social and civic duties. Schools and colleges are full of women, and in our country women cannot be safely allowed to walk in the streets! Their kindness to me is immeasurable. Since I came here, I have been welcomed by them to their houses. They are providing me with food, arranging for my lectures, taking me to market, and doing everything for my comfort and convenience. I shall never be able to repay in the least the deep debt of gratitude I owe to them.

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[1] Haripada Mitra, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

Do you know who is the real "Shakti-worshipper"? It is he who knows that God is the omnipresent force in the universe and sees in women the manifestation of that Force. Many men here look upon their women in this light. Manu, again, has said that gods bless those families where women are happy and well treated. Here men treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence they are so prosperous, so learned, so free, and so energetic. But why is it that we are slavish, miserable, and dead? The answer is obvious.

And how pure and chaste are they here! Few women are married before twenty or twenty-five, and they are as free as the birds in the air. They go to market, school, and college, earn money and do all kinds of work. Those who are well-to-do devote themselves to doing good to the poor. And what are we doing? We are very regular in marrying our girls at eleven years of age lest they should become corrupt and immoral. What does our Manu enjoin? "Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons". As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also must observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents. But what are we actually doing? Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you will remain as backward as you are now.

If anybody is born of a low caste in our country, he is gone for ever, there is no hope for him. Why, what a tyranny it is! There are possibilities, opportunities, and hope for every individual in this country. Today he is poor, tomorrow he may become rich and learned and respected. Here everyone is anxious to help the poor. In India there is a howling cry that we are very poor, but how many charitable associations are there for the well-being of the poor? How many people really weep for the sorrows and sufferings of the millions of poor in India? Are we *men*? What are we doing for their livelihood, for their improvement? We do not touch them, we avoid their company! Are we men? Those thousands of Brâhmanas—what are they doing for the low, downtrodden masses of India? "Don't touch", "Don't touch", is the only phrase that plays upon their lips! How mean and degraded has our eternal religion become at their hands!

Wherein does our reigion lie now? In "Don't touchism" alone, and nowhere else!

I came to this country not to satisfy my curiosity, nor for name or fame, but to see if I could find any means for the support of the poor in India. If God helps me, you will know gradually what those means are.

As regards spirituality, the Americans are far inferior to us, but their society is far superior to ours. We will teach them our spirituality and assimilate what is best in their society.

With love and best wishes,

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

27

C/o GEORGE W. HALE, ESQ.,
541 DEARBORN AVENUE, CHICAGO,
24th January, 1894.

DEAR FRIENDS,[1]

Your letters have reached me. I am surprised that so much about me has reached you. The criticism you mention of the *Interior* is not to be taken as the attitude of the American people. That paper is almost unknown here, and belongs to what they call a "blue-nose Presbyterian paper", very bigoted. Still all the "blue-noses" are not ungentlemanly. The American people, and many of the clergy, are very hospitable to me. That paper wanted a little notoriety by attacking a man who was being lionized by society. That trick is well known here, and they do not think anything of it. Of course, our Indian missionaries may try to make capital out of it. If they do, tell them, "Mark, Jew, a judgment has come upon you!" Their old building is tottering to its foundation and must come down in spite of their hysterical shrieks. I pity them—if their means of living fine lives in India is cut down by the influx of oriental religions here. But not one of their leading clergy is ever against me. Well, when I am in the pond, I must bathe thoroughly.

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[1] His disciples in Madras.

I send you a newspaper cutting of the short sketch of our religion which I read before them. Most of my speeches are extempore. I hope to put them in book form before I leave the country. I do not require any help from India, I have plenty here. Employ the money you have in printing and publishing this short speech, and translating it into the vernaculars throw it broadcast; that will keep us before the national mind. In the meantime do not forget our plan of a central college, and the starting from it to all directions in India. Work hard. . . .

About the women of America, I cannot express my gratitude for their kindness. Lord bless them. In this country, women are the life of every movement and represent all the culture of the nation, for men are too busy to educate themselves.

I have received Kidi's letters. With the question whether caste shall go or come I have nothing to do. My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves. Whether there should be caste or not, whether women should be perfectly free or not, does not concern me. "Liberty of thought and action is the only condition of life, of growth and well-being." Where it does not exist, the man, the race, the nation must go down.

Caste or no caste, creed or no creed, any man, or class, or caste, or nation, or institution which bars the power of free thought and action of an individual—even so long as that power does not injure others—is devilish and must go down.

My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady, and have faith in the Lord. Set to work, I am coming sooner or later. Keep the motto before you—"Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion".

Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But, alas! nobody ever did anything for them. Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course, I am a sympathizer in every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon the *condition of the masses*. Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature? Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done, and *we will do it*. You are all *born to do it*. Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. Onward for ever! Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death—this is our motto.

Onward, brave lads!

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Do not publish this letter; but there is no harm in preaching the idea of elevating the masses by means of a central college, and bringing education as well as religion to the door of the poor by means of missionaries trained in this college. Try to interest everybody.

I send you a few newspaper cuttings—only from the very best and highest. The one by Dr. Thomas is very valuable as written by one of the, if not the leading clergymen of America. The *Interior* with all its fanaticism and thirst for notoriety was bound to say that I was the public favourite. I cut a few lines from that magazine also.

V.

28

CHICAGO,
29th January, 1894.

DEAR DEWANJI SAHEB,

Your last letter reached me a few days ago. You had been to see my poor mother and brothers. I am glad you did. But you have touched the only soft place in my heart. You ought to know, Dewanji, that I am no hardhearted brute. If there is any being I love in the whole world, it is my mother. Yet I believed and still believe that without my giving up the world, the great mission which Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, my great Master, came to preach would not see the light, and where would those young men be who have stood as bulwarks against the surging waves of materialism and luxury of the day? These have done a great amount of good to India, especially to Bengal, and this is only the beginning. With the Lord's help they will do things for which the whole world will bless them for ages. So on the one hand, my vision of the future of Indian religion and that of the whole world, my love for the millions of beings sinking down and down for ages with nobody to help them, nay, nobody with even a thought for them; on the other hand, making those who are nearest and dearest to me miserable; I choose the former. "Lord will do the rest." He is with me, I am sure of that if of anything. So long as I am sincere, nothing can resist me, because He will be my help. Many and many in India could not understand me; and how could they, poor men? Their thoughts never strayed beyond the everyday routine business of eating and drinking. I know only a few noble souls like yourself appreciate me. Lord bless your noble self. But appreciation or no appreciation, I am born to organize these young men; nay, hundreds more in every city are ready to join me; and I want to send them rolling like irresistible waves over India bringing comfort, morality, religion, education to the doors of the meanest and the most downtrodden. And this I will do or die.

Our people, have no idea, no appreciation. On the other hand, that horrible jealousy and suspicious nature which is the natural outcome of a thousand years of slavery make them stand as enemies to every new idea. Still the Lord is great.

About the rati[1] as well as other things you speak of, it is the form in every one of the monasteries in all parts of India, and the worshipping of Guru is the first duty inculcated in the Vedas. It has its bad and good sides; but you must remember we are a unique company, nobody amongst us has a right to force his faith upon the others. Many of us do not believe in any form of idolatry; but they have no right to object when others do it, because that would break the first principle of our religion. Again, God can only be known in and through man. Vibrations of light are everywhere, even in the darkest corners; but it is only in the lamp that it becomes visible to man. Similarly God, though everywhere, we can only conceive Him as a big man. All ideas of God such as merciful preserver, helper, protector—all these are human ideas, anthropomorphic; and again these must cling to a man, call him a Guru or a Prophet or an Incarnation. Man cannot go beyond his nature, no more than you can jump out of your body. What harm is there in some people worshipping their Guru when that Guru was a hundred times more holy than even your historical prophets all taken together? If there is no harm in worshipping Christ, Krishna, or Buddha, why should there be any in worshipping this man who never did or thought anything unholy, whose intellect only through intuition stands head and shoulders above all the other prophets, because they were all one-sided? It was he that brought first to the world this idea of truth, not *in* but *of* every religion, which is gaining ground all over the world, and that without the help of science or philosophy or any other acquirement.

But even this is not compulsory, none of the brethren has told you that all must worship his Guru. No, no, no. But again none of us has a right to object when another worships. Why? Because that would overthrow this most unique society the world has ever seen, ten men of ten different notions and ideas living in perfect harmony. Wait, Dewanji, the Lord is great and merciful, you will see more.

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[1] Waving of light etc. before a deity.

We do not only tolerate but accept every religion, and with the Lord's help I am trying to preach it to the whole world.

Three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great:

1. Conviction of the powers of goodness.
2. Absence of jealousy and suspicion.
3. Helping all who are trying to be and do good.

Why should the Hindu nation with all its wonderful intelligence and other things have gone to pieces? I would answer you, *Jealousy*. Never were there people more wretchedly jealous of one another, more envious of one another's fame and name than this wretched Hindu race. And if you ever come out in the West, the absence of this is the first feeling which you will see in the Western nations.

Three men cannot act in concert together in India for five minutes. Each one struggles for power and in the long run the whole organization comes to grief. Lord! Lord! When will we learn not to be jealous! In such a nation, and especially in Bengal, to create a band of men who are tied and bound together with a most undying love in spite of difference, is it not wonderful? This band will increase. This idea of wonderful liberality joined with eternal energy and progress must spread over India, it must electrify the whole nation and must enter the very pores of society in spite of the horrible ignorance, spite, caste-feeling, old boobyism, and jealousy which are the heritage of this nation of slaves.

You are one of the few noble natures who stand as rocks out of water in this sea of universal stagnation. Lord bless you for ever and ever!

Yours ever faithfully,
VIVEKANANDA.

29

541 DEARBORN AVENUE,
CHICAGO,
3rd March, 1894

DEAR KIDI,

. . . I agree with you so far that faith is a wonderful insight and that it alone can save; but there is the danger in it of breeding fanaticism barring further progress. Jnana is all right, but there is the danger of its becoming dry intellectualism. Love is great and noble, but it may die away in meaningless sentimentalism. A harmony of all these is the thing required. Ramakrishna was such a harmony. Such beings are few and far between; but keeping him and his teachings as the ideal we can move on. And if amongst us, each one may not individually attain to that perfection, still we may get it collectively by counteracting, equipoising, adjusting, and fulfilling one another. This would be *harmony* by a number of persons, and a decided advance on all other forms and creeds.

For a religion to be effective, enthusiasm is necessary. At the same time we must try to avoid the danger of multiplying creeds. We avoid that by being a non-sectarian sect, having all the advantages of a sect and the broadness of a universal religion.

God, though everywhere, can be known to us in and through human character. No character was ever so perfect as Ramakrishna, and that should be the centre round which we ought to rally; at the same time allowing everybody to regard him in his own light, either as God, Saviour, teacher, model, or a great man, just as he pleases.

We preach neither social equality nor inequality, but that every being has the same rights, and insist upon freedom of thought and action in every way.

We reject none, neither theist, nor pantheist, monist, polytheist, agnostic, nor atheist; the only condition of being a disciple is modelling a character at once the broadest and the most intense.

Nor do we insist upon particular codes of morality as to conduct, or character, or eating and drinking, except so far as it injures others.

Whatever retards the onward progress or helps the downward fall is vice; whatever helps in coming up and becoming harmonized is *virtue*.

We leave everybody free to know, select, and follow whatever suits and helps him. Thus, for example, eating meat may help one, eating fruit another. Each is welcome to his own peculiarity; but he has no right to criticize the conduct of others, because that would, if followed by him, injure him, much less to insist that others should follow his way. A wife may help some people in this progress, to others she may be a positive injury. But the unmarried man has no right to say that the married disciple is wrong, much less to force his own ideal of morality upon his brother.

We believe that every being is divine, is God. Every soul is a sun covered over with clouds of ignorance, the difference between soul and soul is due to the difference in density of these layers of clouds. We believe that this is the conscious or unconscious basis of all religions, and that this is the explanation of the whole history of human progress either in the material, intellectual, or spiritual plane—the same spirit is manifesting through different planes.

We believe that this is the very essence of the Vedas.

We believe that it is the duty of every *soul* to treat, think of, and behave to other *souls* as such, i.e. as *Gods*, and not hate or despise, or vilify, or try to injure them by any manner or means. This is the duty not only of the Sannyasin but of all men and women.

The soul has neither sex, nor caste, nor imperfection.

We believe that nowhere throughout the Vedas, Darshanas, or Purânas, or Tantras, it is ever said that the soul has any sex, creed, or caste. Therefore we agree with those who say, "What has religion to do with social reforms?" But they must also agree with us when we tell them that religion has no business to formulate social laws and insist on the difference between beings. Because its aim and end is to obliterate all such fictions and monstrosities.

If it be pleaded that through this difference we would reach the final equality and unity, we answer that the same religion has said over and over again, that mud cannot be washed with mud.

As if a man can be moral by being immoral!

Social laws were created by economic conditions under the sanction of religion. The terrible mistake of religion was to interfere in social matters. But how hypocritically it says and thereby contradicts itself—"Social reform is not the business of religion!" True, what we want is that religion should not be a social reformer, but we insist at the same time that religion has no right to become a social law-giver. Hands off! Keep yourself to your own bounds and everything would come right.

1. Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.

2. Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.

Therefore the only duty of the teacher in both cases is to remove all obstructions from the way. Hands off! as I always say, and everything will be right. That is, our duty is to clear the way. The Lord does the rest.

Specially therefore you must bear in mind that religion has to do only with the soul and has no business to interfere in social matters—you must also bear in mind that this applies completely to the mischief which has already been done. It is as if a man after forcibly taking possession of another's property cries through the nose when that man tries to regain it—and preaches the doctrine of the sanctity of human right!

What business had the priest to interfere (to the misery of millions of human beings) in every social matter?

You speak of the meat-eating Kshatriya; meat or no meat, it is they who are the fathers of all that is noble and beautiful in Hinduism. Who wrote the Upanishads? Who was Rama? Who was Krishna? Who was Buddha? Who were the Tirthankaras of the Jains? Whenever the Kshatriyas have preached religion, they have given it to everybody; and whenever the Brahmins wrote anything, they would deny all right to others. Read the Gita and the Sutras of Vyasa, or get some one to read them to you. In the Gita the way is laid open to all men and women, to all caste and colour, but Vyasa tries to put meanings upon the Vedas to cheat the poor Shudras. Is God a nervous fool like you that the flow of His river of mercy would be dammed up by a piece of meat? If such be He, His value is not a pie!

Hope nothing from me, but I am convinced, as I wrote to you, and had spoken to you, that India is to be saved by the Indians themselves. So `you, young men of the motherland, can dozens of you become almost fanatics over this new idea! Take thought, get materials, write a sketch of the life of Ramakrishna, *studiously avoiding all miracles.* The life should be written as an illustration of the doctrines he preached. Only his—do not bring me or any living persons into that. The main aim should be to give to the world what he taught, and the life as illustrating that. I, unworthy though I am, had one commission—to bring out the casket of jewels that was placed in my charge, and make it over to you. Why to you? Because the hypocrites, the jealous, the slavish, and the cowardly, those who believe in matter only, can never do anything. Jealousy is the bane of our national character, natural to slaves. Even the Lord with all His power can do nothing on account of the jealousy. . . . Think of me as one who has done all his duty and is now dead and gone. Think that the whole work is upon your shoulders. . . . Think that you, young men of our motherland were destined to do this. Put yourself to the task. Lord bless you. Leave me, throw me quite out of sight. Preach the new ideal, the new doctrine, the new life. Preach against nobody, against no custom. Preach neither for nor against caste or any other social evil; preach to let "Hands off", and everything will come right

With my blessings on you all, my brave steadfast and loving souls,

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

30

DETROIT,
15th March, 1894.

DEAR BABIES,[1]

I am pulling on well with old Palmer. He is a very jolly, good old man. I got only 127 dollars by my last lecture. I am going to speak again in Detroit on Monday. Your mother asked me to write to a lady in Lynn. I have never seen her. Is it etiquette to write without any introduction? Please post me a little better on this lady. Where is Lynn? The funniest thing said about me here was in one of the papers which said, "The cyclonic Hindu has come and is a guest with Mr. Palmer. Mr. Palmer has become a Hindu and is going to India; only he insists that two reforms should be carried out: firstly that the Car of Jagannath should be drawn by Percherons raised in Mr. Palmer's Loghouse Farm, and secondly that the Jersey cow be admitted into the pantheon of Hindu sacred cows." Mr. Palmer is passionately fond of both Percheron horse and Jersey cow and has a great stock of both in his Loghouse Farm.

The first lecture was not properly managed, the cost of the hall being 150 dollars. I have given up Holden. Here is another fellow cropped up; let me see if he does better. Mr. Palmer makes me laugh the whole day. Tomorrow there is going to be another dinner party. So far all is well; but I do not know—I have become very sad in my heart since I am here—do not know why.

I am wearied of lecturing and all that nonsense. This mixing with hundreds of varieties of human animal has disturbed me. I will tell you what is to my taste; I cannot write and I cannot speak, but I can think deeply, and when I am heated, can speak fire. It should be, however, to a select, a very select few. Let them, if they will, carry and scatter my ideas broadcast—not I. This is only a just division of labour. The same man never succeeded both in thinking and in scattering his thoughts. A man should be free to think, especially spiritual thoughts.

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[1] Misses Harriet Hale and Mary Hale and their cousins—Misses Harriet McKindley and Isabelle McKindley—all referred to by Swamiji as the "Hale Sisters". Swamiji often lived in their house at Chicago; and they all treated him as their brother. He called Mr. G. W. Hale "Father Pope", and Mrs. Hale "Mother Church".

Just because this assertion of independence, this proving that man is *not a machine,* is the essence of all religious thought, it is impossible to think it in the routine mechanical way. It is this tendency to bring everything down to the level of a machine that has given the West its wonderful prosperity. And it is this which has driven away all religion from its doors. Even the little that is left, the West has reduced to a systematic drill.

I am really not "cyclonic" at all. Far from it. What I want is not here, nor can I longer bear this "cyclonic" atmosphere. This is the way to perfection, to strive to be perfect, and to strive to make perfect a few men and women. My idea of doing good is this: to evolve out a few giants, and not to strew pearls before swine, and so lose time, health, and energy.

Just now I got a letter from Flagg. He cannot help me in lecturing. He says, "First go to Boston". Well, I do not care for lecturing any more. It is too disgusting, this attempt to bring me to suit anybody's or any audience's fads. However, I shall come back to Chicago for a day or two at least before I go out of this country. Lord bless you all.

Ever gratefully your brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

31

DETROIT,
17th March, 1894.

DEAR SISTER,[1]

Got your package yesterday. Sorry that you send those stockings—I could have got some myself here. Glad that it shows your love. After all, the satchel has become more than a thoroughly stuffed sausage. I do not know how to carry it along.

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[1] Miss Harriet McKindley of Chicago.

I have returned today to Mrs. Bagley's as she was sorry that I would remain so long with Mr. Palmer. Of course in Palmer's house there was real "good time". He is a real jovial heartwhole fellow, and likes "good time" a little too much and his 'hot Scotch". But he is right along innocent and child-like in his simplicity.

He was very sorry that I came away but I could not help. Here is a beautiful young girl. I saw her twice, I do not remember her name. So brainy, so beautiful, so spiritual, so unworldly! Lord bless her! She came this morning with Mrs. M'cDuvel and talked so beautifully and deep and spiritually—that I was quite astounded. She knows everything about the Yogis and is herself much advanced in Practice!!

"Thy ways are beyond searching out." Lord bless her—so innocent, holy, and pure! This is the grandest recompense in my terribly toilsome, miserable life—the finding of holy, happy faces like you from time to time. The great Buddhist prayer is, "I bow down to all holy men on earth". I feel the real meaning of this prayer whenever I see a face upon which the finger of the Lord has written in unmistakable letters "mine". May you all be happy, blessed—good and pure as you are for ever and ever. May your feet never touch the mud and dirt of this terrible world. May you live and pass away like flowers as you are born—is the constant prayer of your brother

VIVEKANANDA.

32

DETROIT,
18th March, 1894.

DEAR SISTER MARY,

My heartfelt thanks for your kindly sending me the letter from Calcutta. It was from my brethren at Calcutta and it is written on the occasion of a private invitation to celebrate the birthday of my Master about whom you have heard so much from me—so I send it over to you. The letter says that

Mazoomdar has gone back to Calcutta and is preaching that Vivekananda is committing every sin under the sun in America. . . . This is your America's *wonderful spiritual man*! It is not their fault, until one is really spiritual, that is, until one has got a real insight into the nature of one's own soul and has got a glimpse of the world of the soul, one cannot distinguish chaff from seed, tall talk from depth, and so on. I am sorry for poor Mazoomdar that he should stoop so low! Lord bless the old boy!

The address inside the letter is in English and is my old, old name as written by a companion of my childhood who has also taken orders. It is a very poetic name. That written in the letter is an abbreviation, the full name being Narendra, meaning the "Chief of men" ("nara" means "man", and "indra" stands for "ruler", "chief")—very ludicrous, isn't it? But such are the names in our country; we cannot help; but I am glad I have given that up.

I am alright. Hoping it is the same with you.

I remain your brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

33

(From a letter written to H. H. the Maharaja of Khetri)

AMERICA,
1894.

. . . "It is not the building that makes the home, but it is the wife that makes it",[1] says a Sanskrit poet, and how true it is! The roof that affords you shelter from heat and cold and rain is not to be judged by the pillars that support it—the finest Corinthian columns though they be—but by the real spirit-pillar who is the centre, the real support of the home—the woman. Judged by that standard, the American home will not suffer in comparison with any home in the world.

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[1] "न गृहं गृहमित्याहुर्गृहिणी गृहमुच्यते।"

I have heard many stories about the American home: of liberty running into licence, of unwomanly women smashing under their feet all the peace and happiness of home-life in their mad liberty-dance, and much nonsense of that type. And now after a year's experience of American homes, of American women, how utterly false and erroneous that sort of judgment appears! American women! A hundred lives would not be sufficient to pay my deep debt of gratitude to you! I have not words enough to express my gratitude to you! "The Oriental hyperbole" alone expresses the depth of Oriental gratitude—"If the Indian Ocean were an inkstand, the highest mountain of the Himalayas, the pen, the earth, the scroll and time itself, the writer,[1] still it will not express my gratitude to you!"

Last year I came to this country in summer, a wandering preacher of a far distant country, without name, fame, wealth, or learning to recommend me—friendless, helpless, almost in a state of destitution—and American women befriended me, gave me shelter and food, took me to their homes and treated me as their own son, their own brother. They stood my friends even when their own priests were trying to persuade them to give up the "dangerous heathen"—even when day after day their best friends had told them not to stand by this "unknown foreigner, may be, of dangerous character". But they are better judges of character and soul—for it is the pure mirror that catches the reflection.

And how many beautiful homes I have seen, how many mothers whose purity of character, whose unselfish love for their children are beyond expression, how many daughters and pure maidens, "pure as the icicle on Diana's temple" and withal with such culture, education, and spirituality in the highest sense! Is America then full of only wingless angels in the shape of women? There is good and bad everywhere, true—but a nation is not to be judged by its weaklings called the wicked, as they are only the weeds which lag behind, but by the good, the noble, and the pure who indicate the national life-current to be flowing clear and vigorous.

Do you judge of an apple tree and the taste of its fruits by the unripe, undeveloped, worm-eaten ones that strew the ground, large even though their number be sometimes? If there is one ripe developed fruit, that one would indicate the powers, the possibility, and the purpose of the apple tree and not hundreds that could not grow.

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[1] Adapted from the *Shiva Mahimnah Stotram.*

And then the modern American women—I admire their broad and liberal minds. I have seen many liberal and broad-minded men too in this country, some even in the narrowest churches, but here is the difference—there is danger with the men to become broad at the cost of religion, at the cost of spirituality—women broaden out in sympathy to everything that is good everywhere, without losing a bit of their own religion. They intuitively know that it is a question of positivity and not negativity, a question of addition and not subtraction. They are every day becoming aware of the fact that it is the affirmative and positive side of everything that shall be stored up, and that this very act of accumulating the affirmative and positive, and therefore soul-building forces of nature, is what destroys the negative and destructive elements in the world.

What a wonderful achievement was that World's Fair at Chicago! And that wonderful Parliament of Religions where voices from every corner of the earth expressed their religious ideas! I was also allowed to present my own ideas through the kindness of Dr. Barrows and Mr. Bonney. Mr. Bonney is such a wonderful man! Think of that mind that planned and carried out with great success that gigantic undertaking, and he no clergyman, a lawyer presiding over the dignitaries of all the churches—the sweet, learned, patient Mr. Bonney with all his soul speaking through his bright eyes. . . .

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

34*

Salutation to Bhagavân Ramakrishna !

C/o GEORGE W. HALE, ESQ.,
541 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago,
19th March, 1894.

MY DEAR SHASHI,

I have not written to you since coming to this country. But Haridas Bhai's[1] letter gives me all the news. It is excellent that G. C. Ghosh[2] and all of you have treated him with due consideration.

I have no wants in this country, but mendicancy has no vogue here, and I have to labour, that is, lecture in places. It is as cold here as it is hot. The summer is not a bit less hot than in Calcutta. And how to describe the cold in winter! The whole country is covered with snow, three or four feet deep, nay, six or seven feet, at places! In the southern parts there is no snow. Snow, however, is a thing of little consideration here. For it snows when the mercury stands at 32°F. In Calcutta it scarcely comes down to 60°, and it rarely approaches zero in England. But here, your mercury sinks to *minus* 4° or 5°. In Canada, in the north, mercury becomes condensed, when they have to use the alcohol thermometer. When it is too cold, that is, when the mercury stands even below 20°F, it does not snow. I used to think that it must be an exceedingly cold day on which the snow falls. But it is not so, it snows on comparatively warm days. Extreme cold produces a sort of intoxication. No carriages would run; only the sledge, which is without wheels, slides on the ground! Everything is frozen stiff—even an elephant can walk on rivers and canals and lakes. The massive Falls of Niagara, of such tremendous velocity, are frozen to marble!! But I am doing nicely. I was a little afraid at first, but necessity makes me travel by rail to the borders of Canada one day, and the next day finds me lecturing in south U.S.A.!

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[1] Haridas Viharidas Desai, Dewan of Junagad.

[2] Girish Chandra Ghosh (or Girish Babu)—the great actor-dramatist of Bengal, and a staunch devotee of Shri Ramakrishna.

The carriages are kept quite warm, like your own room, by means of steam pipes, and all around are masses of snow, spotlessly white. Oh, the beauty of it!

I was mortally afraid that my nose and ears would fall off, but to this day they are all right. I have to go out, however, dressed in a heap of warm clothing surmounted by a fur-coat, with boots encased in a woollen jacket, and so on. No sooner do you breathe out than the breath freezes among the beard and moustache! Notwithstanding all this, the fun of it is that they won't drink water indoors without putting a lump of ice into it. This is because it is warm indoors. Every room and the staircase are kept warm by steam pipes. They are first and foremost in art and appliances, foremost in enjoyment and luxury, foremost in making money, and foremost in spending it. The daily wages of a coolie are six rupees, as also are those of a servant; you cannot hire a cab for less than three rupees, nor get a cigar for less than four annas. A decent pair of shoes cost twenty-four rupees, and a suit, rupees five hundred. As they earn, so they spend. A lecture fetches from two hundred up to three thousand rupees. I have got up to five hundred.[1] Of course now I am in the very heyday of fortune. They like me, and thousands of people come to hear me speak.

As it pleased the Lord, I met here Mr. Mazoomdar. He was very cordial at first, but when the whole Chicago population began to flock to me in overwhelming numbers, then grew the canker in his mind! . . . The priests tried their utmost to snub me. But the Guru (Teacher) is with me, what could anybody do? And the whole American nation loves and respects me, pays my expenses, and reveres me as a Guru. . . . It was not in the power of your priests to do anything against me. Moreover, they are a nation of scholars. Here it would no longer do to say, "We marry our widows", "We do not worship idols", and things of that sort. What they want is philosophy, learning; and empty talk will no more do.

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[1] For some time after the Chicago Address Swamiji lectured on behalf of a lecture Bureau, which task, however, he soon gave up as curtailing his independence, and devoted most of the money thus earned to various charitable works in different parts of India and America.

Dharmapal is a fine boy. He has not much of learning but is very gentle. He had a good deal of popularity in this country.

Brother, I have been brought to my senses. . . . ये निघ्नन्ति निरर्थकं परहितं ते के न जानीमहे— "We do not know what sort of people they are who for nothing hinder the welfare of others" (Bhartrihari). Brother, we can get rid of everything, but not of that cursed jealousy. . . . That is a national sin with us, speaking ill of others, and burning at heart at the greatness of others. Mine alone is the greatness, none else should rise to it! !

Nowhere in the world are women like those of this country. How pure, independent, self-relying, and kind-hearted! It is the women who are the life and soul of this country. All learning and culture are centred in them. The saying, या श्रीः स्वयं सुकृतिनां भवनेषु "Who is the Goddess of Fortune Herself in the families of the meritorious" (*Chandi*)—holds good in this country, while that other अलक्ष्मीः पापात्मनां —"The Goddess of ill luck in the homes of the sinful (ibid.) —applies to ours. Just think on this. Great God! I am struck dumb with wonderment at seeing the women of America— त्वं श्रीस्त्वमीश्वरी त्व ह्रीः etc.—"Thou art the Goddess of Fortune. Thou art the supreme Goddess, Thou art Modesty" (ibid.); या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्तिरूपेण संस्थिता —"The Goddess who resides in all beings as Power" (ibid.). All this holds good here. There are thousands of women here whose minds are as pure and white as the snow of this country. And look at our girls, becoming mothers below their teens! Good Lord! I now see it all. Brother, यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः "The gods are pleased where the women are held in esteem"—says the old Manu. We are horrible sinners, and our degradation is due to our calling women "despicable worms", "gateways to hell", and so forth. Goodness gracious! There is all the difference between heaven and hell! याथातथ्यतोऽर्थान् व्यदधात् "He adjudges gifts according to the merits of the case." Is the Lord to be hoodwinked by idle talk? The Lord has said, वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी —"Thou art the woman, Thou art the man. Thou art the boy and the girl as well" (*Shvetâshvatara Upa.*). And we on our part are crying, दूरमपसर रे चण्डाल— "Be off, thou outcaste!" केनैषा निर्मिता नारी मोहिनी etc.—"By whom was made the bewitching woman?" My brother, what experiences I have had in the South, of the upper classes torturing the lower! What Bacchanalian orgies within the temples! Is it a religion that fails to remove the misery of the poor and turn men into gods! Do you think our religion is worth the name? Ours is only Don't-touchism, only "Touch me not", "Touch me not". Good heavens! A country, the big leaders of which have for the last two thousand years been only discussing whether to take food with the right hand or the left, whether to take water from the right hand or the left, whether to take water from the right-hand side or from the left, . . . if such a country does not go to ruin what other will? कालः सुप्तेषु जागर्ति कालो हि दुरतिक्रमः —"Time keeps wide awake when all else sleeps. Time is invincible indeed!" He knows it; who is there to throw dust in His eyes, my friend?

A country where millions of people live on flowers of the Mohuâ plant—and a million or two of Sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmins suck the blood out of these poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration—is that a country or hell? Is that a religion, or the devil's dance? My brother, here is one thing for you to understand fully—I have travelled all over India, and seen this country too—can there be an effect without cause? Can there be punishment without sin?

सर्वशास्त्रपुराणेषु व्यासस्य वचनं ध्रुवं ।
परोपकारस्तु पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम् ॥

—"Amidst all the scriptures and Purânas, know this statement of Vyâsa to be true, that doing good to others conduces to merit, and doing harm to them leads to sin."

Isn't it true?

My brother, in view of all this, specially of the poverty and ignorance, I had no sleep. At Cape Comorin sitting in Mother Kumâri's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock—I hit upon a plan: We are so many Sannyasins wandering about and teaching the people metaphysics—it is all madness. Did not our Gurudeva use to say, "An empty stomach is no good for religion"? That those poor people are leading the life of brutes is simply due to ignorance. We have for all ages been sucking their blood and trampling them under foot.

. . . Suppose some disinterested Sannyasins, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education and seeking in various ways to better the condition of all down to the Chandâla, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes, and such other accessories—can't that bring forth good in time? All these plans I cannot write out in this short letter. The long and the short of it is—if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. The poor are too poor to come to schools and Pâthashâlâs, and they will gain nothing by reading poetry and all that sort of thing. We as a nation have lost our individuality, and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and *raise the masses*. The Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian, all have trampled them under foot. Again the force to raise them must come from inside, that is, from the orthodox Hindus. In every country the evils exist not with, but against, religion. Religion therefore is not to blame, but men.

To effect this, the first thing we need is men, and the next is funds. Through the grace of our Guru I was sure to get from ten to fifteen men in every town. I next travelled in search of funds, but do you think the people of India were going to spend money? . . . Selfishness personified—are they to spend anything? Therefore I have come to America, to earn money myself, and then return to my country and devote the rest of my days to the realization of this one aim of my life.

As our country is poor in social virtues, so this country is lacking in spirituality. I give them spirituality, and they give me money. I do not know how long I shall take to realize my end. . . . These people are not hypocrites, and jealousy is altogether absent in them. I depend on no one in Hindusthan. I shall try to earn the wherewithal myself to the best of my might and carry out my plans, or die in the attempt. सन्निमित्ते वरं त्यागो विनाशे नियते सति —"When death is certain, it is best to sacrifice oneself for a good cause."

You may perhaps think what Utopian nonsense all this is! You little know what is in me. If any of you help me in my plans, all right, or Gurudeva will show me the way out. . . . We cannot give up jealousy and rally together. That is our national sin! It is not to be met with in this country, and this is what has made them so great.

Nowhere in the world have I come across such "frogs-in-the-well" as we are. Let anything new come from some foreign country, and America will be the first to accept it. But we?—oh, there are none like us in the world, we men of Aryan blood! ! Where that heredity really expresses itself, I do not see. . . . Yet they are descendants of the Aryans?

Ever yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

35*

C/o GEORGE W. HALE, ESQ.,
541 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago,
1894

MY DEAR—,[1]

Very glad to receive your letter. I am very sorry to hear of Mazoomdar's doings. One always behaves thus in trying to push oneself before all others. I am not much to blame. Mazoomdar came here ten years ago, and got much reputation and honour; now I am in flying colours. Such is the will of the Guru, what shall I do? It is childishness on Mazoomdar's part to be annoyed at this. Never mind— उपेक्षितव्यं तद्वचनं भवत्सदृशानां महात्मनाम्। अपि कीटदंशनभीरुका वयं रामकृष्णतनयास्तद्हृदयरुधिरपोषिताः। "अलोकसामान्यमचिन्त्यहेतुकं निन्दन्ति मन्दाश्चरितं महात्मनाम्" इत्यादीनि संस्मृत्य क्षन्तव्योऽयं जाल्मः—Great men like you should pay no heed to what he says. Shall we, children of Shri Ramakrishna, nourished with his heart's blood, be afraid of worm-bites?—

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[1] Swami Ramakrishnananda.

"The wicked criticize the conduct of the magnanimous, which is extraordinary and whose motives are difficult to fathom",[1] —remember all this and forgive this fool. It is the will of the Lord that people of this land have their power of introspection roused, and does it lie in anybody to check His progress? I want no name—I want to be a voice without a form. I do not require anybody to defend me— कोऽहं तत्पादप्रसरं प्रतिरोद्धुं समर्थयितुं वा, के वान्ये ? तथापि मम हृदयकृतज्ञता तान् प्रति —Who am I to check or to help the course of His march? And who are others also? Still, my heartfelt gratitude to them. "यस्मिंस्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते"—नैषः प्राप्तवान् तत्पदवीमिति मत्वा करुणादृष्टया द्रष्टव्योऽयमिति —"Established in which state a man is not moved even by great misfortune" (*Gita*)—that state he has not reached; think of this and look upon him with pity. Through the Lord's will, the desire for name and fame has not yet crept into my heart, and I dare say never will. I am an instrument, and He is the operator. Through this instrument He is rousing the religious instinct in thousands of hearts in this far-off country. Thousands of men and women here love and revere me. . . . मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् —"He makes the dumb eloquent and makes the lame cross mountains." I am amazed at His grace. Whatever town I visit, it is in an uproar. They have named me "the cyclonic Hindu". Remember, it is His will—I am a voice without a form.

The Lord knows whether I shall go to England or any other blessed place. He will arrange everything. Here a cigar costs one rupee. Once you get into a cab, you have to pay three rupees; a coat costs a hundred rupees; the hotel charge is nine rupees a day.—The Lord provides everything. . . . The Lord be praised, I know nothing. सत्यमेव जयते नानृतम्, सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः —"Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through Truth alone lies the path of Devayâna." You must be fearless. It is the coward who fears and defends himself. Let no one amongst us come forward to defend me. I get all news of Madras and Rajputana, from time to time. . . . There are eyes that can see at a distance of fourteen thousand miles. It is quite true. Keep quiet now, everything will see the light in time, as far as He wills it. Not one word of His proves untrue. My brother, do men grieve over the fight of cats and dogs? So the jealousy, envy, and elbowing of common men should make no impression on your mind. For the last six months I have been saying, the curtain is going up, the sun is rising. Yes, the curtain is lifting, by degrees, slow but sure, you will come to know it in time. *He* knows. One cannot speak out one's mind. These are things not for writing. . . . Never let go your hold of the rubber, grasp it firm. We are steering all right, no mistaking that, but landing on the other shore is only a question of time. That's all. Can a leader be made, my brother? A leader is born. Do you understand? And it is a very difficult task to take on the role of a leader. —One must be दासस्य दासः —a servant of servants, and must accommodate a thousand minds. There must not be a shade of jealousy or selfishness, then you are a leader. First, by birth, and secondly, by unselfishness—that's a leader. Everything is going all right, everything will come round. He casts the net all right, and winds it up likewise. वयमनुसरामः वयमनुसरामः, प्रीतिः परमसाधनम् —Ours is but to follow; love is the best instrument. Love conquers in the long run. It won't do to become impatient—wait, wait—patience is bound to give success. . . .

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[1] Kalidasa's *Kumârasambhavam*.

I tell you, brother, let everything go on as it is, only take care that no form becomes necessary—unity in variety—see that universality be not hampered in the least. Everything must be sacrificed, if necessary, for that one sentiment, *universality*. Whether I live or die, whether I go back to India or not, remember this specially, that universality—perfect acceptance, not tolerance only—we preach and perform. take care how you trample on the least rights of others. Many a huge ship has foundered in that whirlpool. Remember, perfect devotion minus its bigotry—this is what we have got to show. Through His grace everything will go all right. . . . Everybody wants to be a leader; but it is the failure to grasp that he is *born*, that causes all this mischief. . . .

Our matrons are all hale and hearty, I hope. Where is Gour-Mâ? We want a thousand such Mothers, with that noble stirring spirit. . . . We want all. It is not at all necessary that all should have the same faith in our Lord as we have, but we want to unite all the powers of goodness against all the powers of evil. . . . A besetting sin with Sannyasins is the taking pride in their monastic order. That may have its utility during the first stages, but when they are full grown, they need it no more. One must make no distinction between householders and Sannyasins—then only one is a true Sannyasin.

A movement which half a dozen penniless boys set on foot and which now bids fair to progress in such an accelerated motion—is it a humbug or the Lord's will? If it is, then let all give up party-spirit and jealousy, and unite in action. A universal religion cannot be set up through party faction. . . .

If all understand one day for one minute that one cannot become great by the mere wish, that he only rises whom He raises, and he falls whom He brings down, then all trouble is at an end. But there is that egotism—hollow in itself and without the power to move a finger: how ludicrous of it to say, "I won't let anyone rise!" That jealousy, that absence of conjoint action is the very nature of enslaved nations. But we must try to shake it off. The terrible jealousy is characteristic of us. . . . You will be convinced of this if you visit some other countries. Our fellows in this respect are the enfranchised Negroes of this country—if but one amongst them rises to greatness, all the others would at once set themselves against him and try to level him down by making a common cause with the whites. . . .

At any cost, any price, any sacrifice, we must never allow that to creep in among ourselves. Whether we be ten or two, do not care, but those few must be perfect characters. . . . "It is not good to ask of one's father if the Lord keeps His promise (to look after His devotees)." And the Lord *will* do so, set your minds easy on that score. . . . We must spread his name in Rajputana, Punjab, U.P., Madras, and such other provinces—yes, in Rajputana, where still there are people who can say, "Such has ever been the custom with Raghu's line that they keep their word even at the cost of life."

A bird, in the course of its flight, reaches a spot whence it looks on the ground below with supreme calmness. Have you reached that spot? He who has not reached there has no right to teach others. Relax your limbs and float with the current, and you are sure to reach your destination.

Cold is making itself scarce by degrees, and I have been almost through the winter. Here in winter the whole body becomes charged with electricity. In shaking hands one feels a shock, accompanied by a sound. You can light the gas with your finger. And about the cold I have written to you already. I am coursing through the length and breadth of the country, but Chicago is my "Math" (monastery), where I always return after my wanderings. I am now making for the east. He knows where the bark will reach the shore. . . .

Has Dashu the same sort of love for you? Does he see you frequently? How is Bhavanath, and what is he doing? Do you visit him, and look upon him with an eye of regard? Yes, brother, the distinction between Sannyasin and layman is a fiction. मूकं करोति वाचालं etc.—"He makes the dumb fluent", etc. My friend, it is difficult to judge what is in a particular individual. Shri Ramakrishna has spoken highly of him, and he deserves our respect. Fie upon you if you have no faith even after so much experience! Does he love you? Please convey to him my hearty love and esteem. My love to Kalikrishna Babu, he is a very noble soul. How is Ramlal? Has he got a little faith and devotion? My love and greetings to him. Sanyal is moving all right with the mill, I suppose? Ask him to have patience, and the mill will go on all right.

My heart's love to all.

Ever yours in love,
VIVEKANANDA.

36

Detroit,
March 29, 1894.

Dear Brother,[1]

Your letter just reached me here. I am in a hurry, so excuse a few points which I would take the liberty of correcting you in.

In the first place, I have not one word to say against any religion or founder of religion in the world—whatever you may think of our religion. All religions are sacred to me. Secondly, it is a misstatement that I said that missionaries do not learn our vernaculars. I still stick to my statement that few, if any, of them pay any attention to Sanskrit; nor is it true that I said anything against any religious body—except that I do insist on my statement that India can never be converted to Christianity, and further I deny that the conditions of the lower classes are made any better by Christianity, and add that the majority of southern Indian Christians are not only Catholics, but what they call themselves caste Christians, that is, they stick close to their castes, and I am thoroughly persuaded that if the Hindu society gives up its exclusive policy, ninety per cent of them would rush back to Hinduism with all its defects.

Lastly, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for calling me your fellow-countryman. This is the first time any European foreigner, born in India though he be, has dared to call a detested native by that name—missionary or no missionary. Would you dare call me the same in India? Ask your missionaries, born in India, to do the same—and those not born, to treat them as fellow human beings. As to the rest, you yourself would call me a fool if I admit that my religion or society submits to be judged by strolling globe-trotters or story-writers' narratives.

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[1] Reverend R. A. Hume, the Director of a Mission in India, who wrote to Swami Vivekananda from Auburndale, Massachusetts, on March 21, 1894, in an obvious attempt to draw him into a public debate. Mr. Hume was born in India and started his letter with "Swami Vivekananda, my fellow-countryman from India". His thesis was that the missionaries were justified in what they did in India and how they spoke about her abroad and that Swamiji was misrepresenting India and the Christian missionaries in Detroit and other places in the U.S.A.

My brother—excuse me—what do you know of my society or religion, though born in India? It is absolutely impossible—the society is so closed; and over and above, everyone judges from his preconceived standard of race and religion, does he not? Lord bless you for calling me a fellow-countryman. There may still come a brotherly love and fellowship between the East and West.

Yours fraternally,
VIVEKANANDA.

37

NEW YORK,
9th April, 1894.

DEAR ALASINGA,

I got your last letter a few days ago. You see I am so very busy here, and have to write so many letters every day, that you cannot expect frequent communications from me. But I try my best to keep you in touch with whatever is going on here. I will write to Chicago for one of the books on the Parliament of Religions to be sent over to you. But by this time you have got two of my short speeches.

Secretary Saheb writes me that I must come back to India because that is my field. No doubt of that. But my brother, we are to light a torch which will shed a lustre over all India. So let us not be in a hurry; everything will come by the grace of the Lord. I have lectured in many of the big towns of America, and have got enough to pay my passage back after paying the awful expenses here. I have made a good many friends here, some of them very influential. Of course, the orthodox clergymen are against me; and seeing that it is not easy to grapple with me, they try to hinder, abuse, and vilify me in every way; and Mazoomdar has come to their help. He must have gone mad with jealousy. He has told them that I was a big fraud and a rogue! And again in Calcutta he is telling them that I am leading a most sinful life in America, specially unchaste! Lord bless him! My brother, no good thing can be done without obstruction. It is only those who persevere to the end that succeed. . . . I believe that the Satya Yuga (Golden Age) will come when there will be one caste, one Veda, and peace and harmony. This idea of Satya Yuga is what would revivify India. Believe it. One thing is to be done if you can do it. Can you convene a big meeting in Madras, getting Ramnad or any such big fellow as the President, and pass a resolution of your entire satisfaction at my representation of Hinduism here, and send it to the *Chicago Herald*, *Inter-Ocean*, and the *New York Sun*, and the *Commercial Advertiser* of Detroit (Michigan). Chicago is in Illinois. *New York Sun* requires no particulars. Detroit is in the State of Michigan. Send copies to Dr. Barrows, Chairman of the Parliament of Religions, Chicago. I have forgotten his number, but the street is Indiana Avenue. One copy to Mrs. J. J. Bagley of Detroit, Washington Ave.

Try to make this meeting as big as possible. Get hold of all the big bugs who must join it for their religion and country. Try to get a letter from the Mysore Maharaja and the Dewan approving the meeting and its purpose—so of Khetri—in fact, as big and noisy a crowd as you can.

The resolution would be of such a nature that the Hindu community of Madras, who sent me over, express its entire satisfaction in my work here etc.

Now try if it is possible. This is not much work. Get also letters of sympathy, from all parts you can and print them and send copies to the American papers—as quickly as you can. That will go a long way, my brethren. The Brâhmo Samâj fellows here are trying to talk all sorts of nonsense. We must stop their mouths as fast as we can.

Up boys, and put yourselves to the task! If you can do that, I am sure we will be able to do much in future. Old Hinduism for ever! Down with all liars and rogues! Up, up, my boys, we are sure to win!

As to publishing my letters, such parts as ought to be published may be published for our friends till I come.

When once we begin to work, we shall have a tremendous "boom", but I do not want to talk without working. I do not know, but G. C. Ghosh and Mr. Mitra of Calcutta can get up all the sympathisers of my late Gurudeva (Adorable Teacher) to do the same in Calcutta. If they can, so much the better, Ask them, if they can, to pass the same resolutions in Calcutta. There are thousands in Calcutta who sympathise with our movement. However, I have more faith in you than in them.

Nothing more to write.

Convey my greetings to all our friends—for whom I am always praying.

Yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

38

NEW YORK,
26th April.

DEAR SISTER,[1]

Your letter reached me yesterday. You were perfectly right —I enjoyed the fun of the lunatic *Interior,*[2] but the mail you sent yesterday from India was really, as Mother Church says in her letter, good news after a long interval. There is a beautiful letter from Dewanji. The old man—Lord bless him—offers as usual to help me. Then there was a little pamphlet published in Calcutta about me—revealing that once at least in my life the prophet has been honoured in his own country. There are extracts from American and Indian papers and magazines about me. The extracts printed from Calcutta papers were especially gratifying, although the strain is so fulsome that I refuse to send the pamphlet over to you. They call me illustrious, wonderful, and all sorts of nonsense; but they forward me the gratitude of the whole nation. Now I do not care what they even of my own people say about me—except for one thing. I have an old mother. She has suffered much all her life, and in the midst of all, she could bear to give me up for the service of God and man; but to have given up the most beloved of her children—her hope—to live a beastly immoral life in a far distant country—as Mazoomdar was telling in Calcutta, would have simply killed her. But the Lord is great, none can injure His children.

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[1] Miss Isabelle McKindley of Chicago.

[2] *Chicago Interior*—a Presbyterian newspaper, which opposed Swamiji.

The cat is out of the bag—without my seeking at all. And what do you think is the editor of one of our leading papers which praise me so much and thank God that I came to America to represent Hinduism? Mazoomdar's cousin!—Poor Mazoomdar—he has injured his cause by telling lies through jealousy. Lord knows I never attempted any defence.

I read the article of Mr. Gandhi in the *Forum* before this.

If you have got the *Review of Reviews* of last month—read to mother the testimony about the Hindus in connection with the opium question in India by one of the highest officials of the English in India. He compares the English with the Hindus and lauds the Hindu to the skies. Sir Lepel Griffin was one of the bitterest enemies of our race. What made this change of front?

I had a very good time in Boston at Mrs. Breed's—and saw Prof. Wright. I am going to Boston again. The tailor is making my new gown. I am going to speak at Cambridge University [Harvard] and would be the guest of Prof. Wright there. They write grand welcomes to me in the Boston papers.

I am tired of all this nonsense. Towards the latter part of May I will come back to Chicago. And after a few days' stay would come back to the East again.

I spoke last night at the Waldorf hotel. Mrs. Smith sold tickets at $2.00 each. I had a full hall which by the way was a small one. I have not seen anything of the money yet. Hope to see in the course of the day.

I made a hundred dollars at Lynn, which I do not send because I have to make my new gown and other nonsense.

Do not expect to make any money at Boston. Still I must touch the brain of America and stir it up if I can.

Your loving brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

39*

Salutation to Bhavagan Ramakrishna !

1894..

My dear Akhandananda,

I am very glad to receive your letter. It is a great pleasure to me to learn that you have regained your health to a great extent by your stay at Khetri.

Brother Tarak has done a good deal of work in Madras. Very agreeable news indeed! I heard much praise of him from the people of Madras. . . .

Try to develop spirituality and philanthrophy amongst the Thakurs in the different places of Rajputana. We must work, and this cannot be done by merely sitting idle. Make a trip now and then to Malsisar, Alsisar, and all the other "sars" that are there. And carefully learn Sanskrit and English. Gunanidhi is in the Punjab, I presume. Convey my special love to him and bring him to Khetri. Learn Sanskrit with his help, and teach him English. Let me have his address by all means. . . .

Go from door to door amongst the poor and lower classes of the town of Khetri and teach them religion. Also, let them have oral lessons on geography and such other subjects.. No good will come of sitting idle and having princely dishes and saying "Ramakrishna, O Lord!"—unless you can do some good to the poor. Go to other villages from time to time and teach the people the arts of life as well as religion. Work, worship, and Jnana (knowledge)—first work, and your mind will be purified; otherwise everything will be fruitless like pouring oblations on a pile of ashes instead of in the sacred fire. When Gunanidhi comes, move from door to door of the poor and the destitute in every village of Rajputana. If people object to the kind of food you take, give it up immediately. It is preferable to live on grass for the sake of doing good to others. The Geruā robe is not for enjoyment. It is the banner of heroic work. You must give your body, mind, and speech to "the welfare of the world". You have read— मातृदेवो भव पितृदेवो भव—'Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God,"—but I say, दरिद्रदेवो भव, मूर्खदेवो भव—the poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted—let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.

Ever yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

40

541 DEARBORN AVENUE,
CHICAGO,
1894

DEAR DEWANJI,

Your letter pleased me extremely. I, of course, understand the joke, but I am not the baby to be put off with a joke; now take more.

The secret of success of the Westerners is the power of organization and combination. That is only possible with mutual trust and co-operation and help. Now here is Virchand Gandhi, the Jain, whom you well knew in Bombay. This man never takes anything but pure vegetables even in this terribly cold climate, and tooth and nail tries to defend his countrymen and religion. The people of this country like him very well, but what are they doing who sent him over? They are trying to outcaste him. Jealousy is a vice necessarily generated in slaves. Again it is jealousy that holds them down.

Here were M. and others, they were all trying to lecture and get money thereby. They did something, but I succeeded better than they. Why? I did not put myself as a bar to their success; it was the will of the Lord. But all these . . . except . . . have fabricated and circulated the most horrible lies about me in this country, and at my back. Americans will never stoop to such meanness.

. . . If any man tries to move forward; here everybody is ready to help him. In India you may try tomorrow by writing a single line or praise for me in any of our papers (Hindu), and next day they would be all against me. Why? It is the nature of slaves. They cannot suffer to see any one of their brethren putting his head the least above their rank. . . . Do you mean to compare such stuff with these children of liberty, self-help and brotherly love? The nearest approach to our people are the freed slaves of the U.S.A., the Negroes. Why, in the South they are about twenty millions and are now free. The whites are a handful, still the whites hold them down all the same. Why even when they have every right by law, (and) a bloody war between the brothers has been fought to free these slaves? The same defect—jealousy, not one of these Negroes would bear to see his brother-Negro praised or pushing on. Immediately they would join the whites to crush him down. You can have no idea about it until you come out of India. It is all right for those who have plenty of money and position to let the world roll on thus; but I call him a traitor who, having been educated, nursed in luxury by the heart's blood of the downtrodden, millions of toiling poor, never even takes a thought for them. Where, in what period of history your rich men, noble men, your priests and potentates took any thought for the poor—the grinding of whose faces is the very life-blood of their power?

But the Lord is great, the vengeance came sooner or later, and they who sucked the life-blood of the poor, whose very education was at their expense, whose very power was built on their poverty, were in their turn sold as slaves by hundreds and thousands, their wives and daughters dishonoured, their property robbed for the last 1,000 years, and do you think it was for no cause?

Why amongst the poor of India so many are Mohammedans? It is nonsense to say, they were converted by the sword. It was to gain their liberty from the . . . zemindars and from the . . . priest, and as a consequence you find in Bengal there are more Mohammedans than Hindus amongst the cultivators because there were so many zemindars there. Who thinks of raising these sunken, downtrodden millions? A few thousand graduates do not make a nation, a few rich men do not make a nation. True, our opportunities are less, but still there is enough to feed and clothe and make 300 millions more comfortable, nay, luxurious. Ninety per cent of our people are without education—who thinks of that—these Babus, the so-called patriots?

Now, let me tell you—still there is a God, no joke. He is ordering our lives, and although I know, a nation of slaves cannot but try to bite at the hand that wants to give them medicine, yet, pray with me, you—one of the few that have real sympathy for everything good, for everything great, one at least whom I know to be a man of true ring, nobility of nature, and a thorough sincerity of head and heart—pray with me:

> "Lead, kindly Light,
> amid th' encircling gloom."

I do not care what they say, I love my God, my religion, my country, and above all, myself, a poor beggar. I love the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden; I feel for them—the Lord knows how much. He will show me the way. I do not care a fig for human approbation or criticism. I think of most of them as ignorant, noisy children—they have not penetrated into the inner nature of sympathy, into the spirit which is all love.

I have that insight through the blessing of Ramakrishna. I am trying to work with my little band, all of these poor beggars like me, you have seen them. But the Lord's works have been always done by the lowly, by the poor. You bless me that I may have faith in my Guru, in my God, and in myself.

The only way is love and sympathy. The only worship is love.

May He help you and yours ever and ever.

With prayers and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

41

17 BEACON STREET, BOSTON,
May, 1894.

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI,

By this time you have got the pamphlet and the letters. If you like, I would send you over from Chicago some letters from Indian Princes and ministers—one of these ministers was one of the Commissioners of the late opium commission—that sat under Royal Commission in India. If you like, I will have them write to you to convince you of my not being a cheat. But, my brother, our ideal of life is to hide, to suppress, and to deny.

We are to give up and not to take. Had I not the "Fad" in my head, I would never have come over here. And it was with a hope that it would help my cause that I joined the Parliament of Religions—having always refused it when our people wanted to send me for it. I came over telling them—"that I may or may not join that assembly—and you may send me over if you like". They sent me over leaving me quite free.

You did the rest.

I am morally bound to afford you every satisfaction, my kind friend; but for the rest of the world I do not care what they say—the Sannyasin must not have self-defence. So I beg of you not to publish or show anybody anything in that pamphlet or the letters. I do not care for the attempts of the old missionary; but the fever of jealousy which attacked Mazoomdar gave me a terrible shock, and I pray that he would know better—for he is a great and good man who has tried all his life to do good. But this proves one of my Master's sayings: "Living in a room covered with black soot—however careful you may be—some spots must stick to your clothes." So—however one may try to be good and holy—so long he is in the world, some part of his nature must gravitate downwards.

The way to God is the opposite to that of the world. And to few, very few, are given to have God and mammon at the same time.

I was never a *missionary*, nor ever would be one—my place is in the Himalayas. I have satisfied myself so far—that I can with a full conscience say, "My God, I saw terrible misery amongst my brethren; I searched and discovered the way out of it, tried my best to apply the remedy, but failed. So Thy will be done!"

May His blessings be on you and yours for ever and ever.

Yours affly.,
VIVEKANANDA.

541 Dearborn Ave., Chicago,
I go to Chicago tomorrow or day after,

Yours,
V.

42*

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

1894.

DEAR AND BELOVED,[1]

Your letter gives me all the news over there, I am grieved to hear of the bereavement Balaram Babu's wife has sustained. Such is the Lord's will. This is a place for action, not enjoyment, and everyone will go home when his task is done—some earlier, and some later, that is all. Fakir has gone—well, such is the will of the Lord!

It is a welcome news that Shri Ramakrishna's festival has come off with great éclat; the more his name is spread, the better it is. But there is one thing to know: Great sages come with special messages for the world, and not for name; but their followers throw their teachings overboard and fight over their names—this is verily the history of the world. I do not take into any consideration whether people accept his name or not, but I am ready to lay down my life to help his teachings, his life, and his message spread all over the world. What I am most afraid of is the worship-room. It is not bad in itself, but there is a tendency in some to make this all in all and set up that old-fashioned nonsense over again—this is what makes me nervous. I know why they busy themselves with those old, effete ceremonials. Their spirit craves for work, but having no outlet they waste their energy in ringing bells and all that.

I am giving you a new idea. If you can work it out, then I shall know you are men and will be of service. . . . Make an organized plan. A few cameras, some maps, globes, and some chemicals, etc. are needed. The next thing you want is a big hut. Then you must get together a number of poor, indigent folk. Having done all this, show them pictures to teach them astronomy, geography, etc., and preach Shri Ramakrishna to them. Try to have their eyes opened as to what has taken place or is taking place in different countries, what this world is like, and so forth. You have got lots of poor and ignorant folk there. Go to their cottages, from door to door, in the evening, at noon, any time—and open their eyes. Books etc. won't do—give them oral teaching. Then slowly extend your centres. Can you do all this? Or only bell-ringing?

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[1] The brother-disciples at the Alambazar monastery.

I have heard everything about Brother Tarak from Madras. They are highly pleased with him. Dear Brother Tarak, if you go to Madras and live there for some time, a lot of work will be done. But before you go, start this work there first. Can't the lady devotees convert some widows into disciples? And can't you put a bit of learning into their heads? and can't you then send them out to preach Shri Ramakrishna from door to door, and impart education along with it? . . .

Come! Apply yourselves heart and soul to it. The day of gossip and ceremonials is gone, my boy, *you must work now.* Now, let me see how far a Bengali's religion will go. Niranjan (Niranjanananda) writes that Latu (Adbhutananda) wants some warm clothing. The people here import winter clothing from Europe and India. You will get a wollen wrap in Calcutta at one-fourth of the price at which I might buy it here. . . . I don't know when I shall go to Europe, everything is uncertain with me—I am getting on somehow in this country, that is all.

This is a very funny country. It is now summer; this morning it was as hot as April in Bengal, but now it is as cold as February at Allahabad! So much fluctuation within four hours. The hotels of this country beggar description. For instance, there is a hotel in New York where a room can be hired for up to Rs. 5,000 a day, excluding boarding charges. Not even in Europe is there a country like this in point of luxury. It is indeed the richest country in the world, where money is drained off like water. I seldom live in hotels; but am mostly the guest of people here. To them I am a widely known man. The whole country knows me now,

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so wherever I go, they receive me with open arms into their homes. Mr. Hale's home is my centre in Chicago. I call his wife mother, and his daughters call me brother. I scarcely find a family so highly pure and kind. Or why should God shower His blessings on them in such abundance, my brother? Oh, how wonderfully kind they are! If they chance to learn that a poor man is in a strait at such and such a place, there they will go, ladies and gentlemen, to give him food and clothing, and find him some job! And what do we do!

In summer they leave their homes to go to foreign lands or to the seaside. I, too, shall go somewhere, but have not yet fixed a place. In other points, they are just as you see Englishmen. They have got books and things of that sort, but very dear. You can have five times those things in Calcutta for the same price. In other words, these people will not let foreign goods be imported into the country. They set a heavy tax on them, and as a result, the market goes up enormously. Besides, they are not much in the way of manufacturing clothing, etc. They construct tools and machinery, and grow wheat, rice, cotton, etc., which are fairly cheap.

By the bye, nowadays we have plenty of Hilsâ fish here. Eat your fill, but everything digests. There are many kinds of fruits; plantain, lemon, guava, apple, almond, raisin, and grape are in abundance, besides, many other fruits come from California. There are plenty of pineapples, but there are no mangoes or lichis, or things of that sort.

There is a kind of spinach, which, when cooked, tastes just like our Noté of Bengal, and another class, which they call asparagus, tastes exactly like the tender Dengo herb, but you can't have our Charchari made of it here. There is no Kalâi or any other pulse; they do not even know of them. There is rice, and bread, and numerous varieties of fish and meat, of all descriptions. Their menu is like that of the French. There is your milk, rarely curd, but plenty of whey. Cream is an article of everyday use. In tea and coffee and everything there is that cream—and there is your butter, too, and ice-water—no matter whether it is summer or winter, day or night, whether you have got a bad cold or fever—you have ice-water in abundance. These are scientific people, and laugh when they are told that ice-water aggravates cold. The more you take, the better. And there is plenty of ice-cream, of all sorts of shapes. I have seen the Niagara Falls seven or eight times, the Lord be praised! Very grand no doubt, but not quite as you have heard them spoken of. One day, in winter, we had the aurora borealis.

. . . Only childish prattle! I have not much time to listen to that sort of thing in this life; it will be time enough to see if I can do that in the next. Yogen (Swami Yogananda) has completely rallied by this time, I hope? The vagabond spirit of Sarada (Swami Trigunatita) is not yet at an end, I see. What is wanted is a power of organization—do you understand me? Have any of you got that much brain in your head? If you do, let your mind work. Brother Tarak, Sharat, and Hari will be able to do it. —has got very little originality, but is a very good workman and persevering, which is an essential necessity, and is executive to a degree. . . . We want some disciples—fiery young man—do you see?—intelligent and brave, who dare to go to the jaws of Death, and are ready to swim the ocean across. Do you follow me? We want hundreds like that, both men and women. Try your utmost for that end alone. Make converts right and left, and put them into our purity-drilling machine.

. . . What made you communicate to the *Indian Mirror* that Paramahamsa Deva used to call Narendra such and such, and all sorts of nonsense?—As if he had nothing else to do but that! Only thought-reading and nonsensical mystery-mongering! . . . It is excellent that Sanyal is visiting you often. Do you write letters to Gupta? Convey to him my love, and take kind care of him. Everything will come right by degrees. I don't find much time to write heaps of letters. As for lectures and so forth, I don't prepare them beforehand. Only one I wrote out, which you have printed. The rest I deliver off-hand, whatever comes to my lips—Gurudeva backs me up. I have nothing to do with pen and paper. Once at Detroit I held forth for three hours at a stretch. Sometimes I myself wonder at my own achievement—to think that there was such stuff in this pate! They ask me here to write a book. Well, I think I must do something that way this time. But that's the botheration, who will take the trouble of putting things in black and white and all that! . . . We must electrify society, electrify the world. Idle gossip and barren ceremonials won't do. Ceremonials are meant for householders, your work is the distribution and propagation of thought-currents. If you can do that, then it is all right. . . .

Let character be formed, and then I shall be in your midst. Do you see? We want two thousand Sannyasins, nay ten, or even twenty thousand—men and women, both. What are our matrons doing? We want converts at any risk. Go and tell them, and try yourselves heart and soul. Not householder disciples, mind you, we want Sannyasins. Let each one of you have a hundred heads tonsured—young educated men, not fools. Then you are heroes. We must make a sensation. Give up your passive attitude, gird your loins, and stand up. Let me see you make some electric circuits between Calcutta and Madras. Start centres at places, go on always making converts. Convert everyone into the monastic order, whoever seeks for it, irrespective of sex, and then I shall be in your midst. A huge spiritual tidal wave is coming—he who is low shall become noble, and he who is ignorant shall become the teacher of great scholars—through HIS grace. उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत— "Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached." Life is ever expanding, contraction is death. The self-seeking man who is looking after his personal comforts and leading a lazy life—there is no room for him even in hell. He alone is a child of Shri Ramakrishna who is moved to pity for all creatures and exerts himself for them even at the risk of incurring personal damnation, इतरे कृपणाः— "others are vulgar people". Whoever, at this great spiritual juncture, will stand up with a courageous heart and go on spreading from door to door, from village to village, his message, is alone my brother, and a son of His. This is the test, he who is Ramakrishna's child does not seek his personal good. प्राणात्ययेऽपि परकल्याणच्चिकीर्षवः —"They wish to do good to others even when at the point of death." Those that care for their personal comforts and seek a lazy life, who are ready to sacrifice all before their personal whims, are none of us; let them pack off, while yet there is time. Propagate his character, his teachings, his religion. This is the only spiritual practice, the only worship, this verily is the means, and this the goal. Arise! Arise! A tidal wave is coming! Onward! Men and women, down to the Chandâla (Pariah)—all are pure in his eyes. Onward! Onward! There is no time to care for name, or fame, or Mukti, or Bhakti! We shall look to these some other time. Now in this life let us infinitely spread his lofty character, his sublime life, his infinite soul. This is the only work—there is nothing else to do. Wherever his name will reach, the veriest worm will attain divinity, nay, is actually attaining it, you have got eyes, and don't you see it? Is it a child's play? Is it silly prattle? Is it foolery? उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत —"Arise! Awake!" Great Lord! He is at our back. I cannot write any more.—Onward! I only tell you this, that whoever reads this letter will imbibe my spirit! Have faith! Onward! Great Lord! . . . I feel as if somebody is moving my hand to write in this way. Onward! Great Lord! Everyone will be swept away! Take care, he is coming! Whoever will be ready to serve him—no, not him but his children—the poor and the downtrodden, the sinful and the afflicted, down to the very worm—who will be ready to serve these, in them he will manifest himself. Through their tongue the Goddess of Learning Herself will speak, and the Divine Mother—the Embodiment of all Power—will enthrone Herself in their hearts. Those that are atheists, unbelievers, worthless, and foppish, why do they call themselves as belonging to his fold. . . .

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. . . . The term organization means division of labour. Each does his own part, and all the parts taken together express an ideal of harmony. . . .

43

U.S.A.
20th May, 1894

My dear Sharat,

I am in receipt of your letter and am glad to learn that Shashi is all right. Now I tell you a curious fact. Whenever anyone of you is sick, let him himself or anyone of you visualise him in your mind, and mentally say and strongly imagine that he is all right. That will cure him quickly. You can do it even without his knowledge, and even with thousands of miles between you. Remember it and do not be ill any more. You have received the money by this time. If you all like, you can give to Gopal Rs. 300 from the amount I sent for the Math. I have no more to send now. I have to look after Madras now.

I cannot understand why Sanyal is so miserable on account of his daughters' marriage. After all, he is going to drag his daughters through the dirty Samsâra (world) which he himself wants to escape! I can have but one opinion of that—condemnation! I hate the very name of marriage, in regard to a boy or a girl. Do you mean to say that I have to help in putting someone into bondage, you fool! If my brother Mohin marries, I will throw him off. I am very decided about that. . . .

Yours in love,
Vivekananda.

44

541 Dearborn Avenue,
Chicago,
24th May, 1894.

Dear Adhyapakji,

Herewith I forward to you a letter from one of our ruling princes of Rajputana, His Highness the Maharaja of Khetri. And another from the opium commissioner, late minister of

Junagad, one of the largest states in India, and a man who is called the Gladstone of India. These I hope would convince you of my being no fraud.

One thing I forgot to tell you. I *never* identified myself anyway with Mr. Mazoomdar's party chief.[1] If he says so, he does not speak the truth.

I hope after your perusal you will kindly send the letters over to me, except the pamphlet which I do not care for. I am bound, my dear friend, to give you every satisfaction of my being a genuine Sannyasin, but to *you* alone. I do not care what the rabbles say or think about me. "Some would call you a saint, some a Chandâla; some a lunatic, others a demon. Go on then straight to thy work without heeding either"—thus saith one of our great Sannyasins, an old emperor of India, King Bhartrihari, who joined the order in old times.

May the Lord bless you for ever and ever. My love to all your children and my respects to your noble wife.

I remain ever your friend,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. I had connection with Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri's party[2]—but only on points of special reforms. M— and C—S— I always considered as not sincere, and I have no reason to change my opinion even now. Of course in religious matters even with my friend Panditji I differed much, the chief being, I thinking Sannyasa or (giving up the world) the highest ideal, and he, a sin. So the Brahmo Samajists consider becoming a monk a sin!!

The Brahmo Samaj like Christian Science in your country spread in Calcutta for a certain time and then died out. I am not sorry, neither glad that it died. It has done its work, viz social reform. Its religion was not worth a cent, and so it must die out. If M—think I was one of the causes of its death, he errs. I am even now a great sympathizer of its reforms; but the "booby" religion could not hold its own against the old "Vedanta". What shall I do? Is that my fault? M—has become childish in his old age and takes to tactics not a whit better than those of some of your Christian missionaries. Lord bless him and show him better ways.

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[1] Evidently, Keshab Chandra Sen.
[2] Sâdhâran Brâhmo Samâj.

When are you going to Annisquam? My love to Austin and Bime. My respects to your wife, and for you my love and gratitude is too deep for expression.

Yours ever affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

45

CHICAGO,
28th May, 1894.

DEAR ALASINGA,

I could not reply to your note earlier because I was whirling to and fro from New York to Boston, and also I awaited Narasimha's letter. I do not know when I am going back to India. It is better to leave everything in the hands of Him who is at my back directing me. Try to work without me, as if I never existed. Do not wait for anybody or anything. Do whatever you can. Build your hope on none. Before writing about myself, I will tell you about Narasimha. He has proved a complete failure. . . . However, he wrote to me for help in the last stage, and I will try to help him as much as is in my power. Meanwhile you tell his people to send money as soon as they can for him to go over. . . . He is in distress. Of course I will see that he does not starve.

I have done a good deal of lecturing here. . . . The expenses here are terrible; money has to fly, although I have been almost always taken care of everywhere by the nicest and the highest families.

I do not know whether I shall go away this summer or not. Most probably not. In the meantime try to organize and push on our plans. Believe you can do everything. Know that the Lord is with us, and so, onward, brave souls!

I have had enough appreciation in my own country.

Appreciation or no appreciation, sleep not, slacken not. You must remember that not a bit even of our plans has been as yet carried out.

Act on the educated young men, bring them together, and organize them. Great things can be done by great sacrifices only. No selfishness, no name, no fame, yours or mine, nor my Master's even! Work, work the idea, the plan, my boys, my brave, noble, good souls—to the wheel, to the wheel put your shoulders! Stop not to look back for name, or fame, or any such nonsense. Throw self overboard and work. Remember, "The grass when made into a rope, by being joined together, can even chain a mad elephant." The Lord's blessings on you all! His power be in you all—as I believe it is *already*. "Wake up, stop not until the goal is reached", say the Vedas. Up, up, the long night is passing, the day is approaching, the wave has risen, nothing will be able to resist its tidal fury. The spirit, my boys, the spirit; the love, my children, the love; the faith, the belief; and fear not! The greatest sin is fear.

My blessings on all. Tell all the noble souls in Madras who have helped our cause that I send them my eternal love and gratitude, but I beg of them not to slacken. Throw the idea broadcast. Do not be proud; do not insist upon anything dogmatic; do not go against anything—ours is to put chemicals together, the Lord knows how and when the crystal will form. Above all, be not inflated with my success or yours. Great works are to be done; what is this small success in comparison with what is to come? Believe, believe, the decree has gone forth, the fiat of the Lord has gone forth—India must rise, the masses and the poor are to be made happy. Rejoice that you are the chosen instruments in His hands. The flood of spirituality has risen. I see it is rolling over the land resistless, boundless, all-absorbing. Every man to the fore, every good will be added to its forces, every hand will smooth its way, and glory be unto the Lord! . . .

I do not require any help. Try to get up a fund, buy some magic-lanterns, maps, globes, etc., and some chemicals. Get every evening a crowd of the poor and low, even the Pariahs, and lecture to them about religion first, and then teach them through the magic-lantern and other things, astronomy, geography, etc., in the dialect of the people. Train up a band of fiery young men. Put your fire in them and gradually increase the organization, letting it widen and widen its circle. Do the best you can, do not wait to cross the river when the water has all run down. Printing magazines, papers, etc., are good, no doubt, but actual work, my boys, even if infinitesimal, is better than eternal scribbling and talking. Call a meeting at Bhattacharya's. Get a little money and buy those things I have just now stated, hire a hut, and go to work. Magazines are *secondary*, but this is primary. You must have a hold on the masses. Do not be afraid of a small beginning, great things come afterwards. Be courageous. Do not try to lead your brethren, but serve them. The brutal mania for leading has sunk many a great ship in the waters of life. Take care especially of that, i.e. be unselfish even unto death, and work. I could not write all I was going to say, but the Lord will give you all understanding, my brave boys. At it, my boys! Glory unto the Lord! . . .

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

46*

Salutation to Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna !

1894.

DEAR BROTHERS,[1]

Before this I wrote to you a letter which for want of time was very incomplete. Rakhal and Hari wrote in a letter from Lucknow that Hindu newspapers were praising me, and that they were very glad that twenty thousand people had partaken of food at Shri Ramakrishna's Anniversary. I could do much more work but for the Brahmos and missionaries who have been opposing me unceasingly, and the Hindus of India too did nothing for me. I mean, if the Hindus of Calcutta or Madras had held a meeting and passed a resolution recognising me as their representative, and thanking the American people for receiving me with kindness, things would have progressed appreciably. But it is over a year, and nothing done. Of course I never relied on the Bengalis, but the Madrasis couldn't do anything either. . . .

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[1] Brother-disciples of Swami Vivekananda.

There is no hope for our nation. Not one original idea crosses anyone's brains, all fighting over the same old, threadbare rug—that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was such and such and cock-and-bull stories—stories having neither head nor tail. My God! Won't you do something to show that you are in any way removed from the common run of men? Only indulging in madness! . . . Today you have your bell, tomorrow you add a horn, and follow suit with a chowry the day after; or you introduce a cot today, and tomorrow you have its legs silver-mounted, and people help themselves to a rice-porridge, and you spin out two thousand cock-and-bull stories—in short, nothing but external ceremonials. This is called in English imbecility. Those into whose heads nothing but that sort of silliness enters are called imbecile. Those whose heads have a tendency to be troubled day and night over such questions as whether the bell should ring on the right or on the left, whether the sandal-paste mark should be put on the head or anywhere else, whether the light should be waved twice or four times—simply deserve the name of wretches, and it is owing to that sort of notion that we are the outcasts of Fortune, kicked and spurned at, while the people of the West are masters of the whole world. . . . There is an ocean of difference between idleness and renunciation.

If you want any good to come, just throw your ceremonials overboard and worship the Living God, the Man-God—every being that wears a human form--God in His universal as well as individual aspect. The universal aspect of God means this world, and worshipping it means serving it—this indeed is work, not indulging in ceremonials. Neither is it work to cogitate as to whether the rice-plate should be placed in front of the God for ten minutes or for half an hour—that is called lunacy. Millions of rupees have been spent only that the temple-doors at Varanasi or Vrindaban may play at opening and shutting all day long! Now the Lord is having His toilet, now He is taking His meals, now He is busy on something else we know not what. . . . And all this, while the Living God is dying for want of food, for want of education! The banias of Bombay are erecting hospitals for bugs—while they would do nothing for men—even if they die! You have not the brain to understand this simple thing—that it is a plague with our country, and lunatic asylums are rife all over. . . . Let some of you spread like fire, and preach this worship of the universal aspect of the Godhead—a thing that was never undertaken before in our country. No quarrelling with people, we must be friends with all. . . .

Spread ideas—go from village to village, from door to door—then only there will be real work. Otherwise, lying complacently on the bed and ringing the bell now and then is a sort of disease, pure and simple. . . . Be independent, learn to form independent judgments. That such and such a chapter of such and such a Tantra has prescribed a standard length for the handle of a bell—what matters it to me? Through the Lord's will out of your lips shall come millions of Vedas and Tantras and Puranas. . . . If now you can show this in practice, if you can make three or four hundred thousand disciples in India within a year, then only I may have some hope. . . .

By the bye, you know the boy who had his head shaven and went with Brother Tarak (Shivananda) from Bombay to Rameswaram? He calls himself a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa! Let Brother Tarak initiate him. . . . He had never even met Shri Ramakrishna in his life, and yet a disciple!—What impudence! Without an unbroken chain of discipleship— गुरुपरम्परा —nothing can be done. Is it a child's play? To have no connection whatsoever and call oneself a disciple! The idiot! If that boy refuses to go on in the right way, turn him out. Nothing, I say, can be done without the chain of discipleship, that is, the power that is transmitted from the Guru to the disciple, and from him to his disciple, and so on. Here he comes and proclaims himself a disciple of Ramakrishna—is it tomfoolery? Jagmohan told me of somebody calling himself a brother-disciple of mine. I have now a suspicion that it is that boy. To pose as a brother-disciple! He feels humiliated to call himself a disciple, I dare say, and would fain turn a Guru straightway. Turn him out if he does not follow the established procedure.

Talking of the restlessness of Tulasi (Nirmalananda) and Subodh (Subodhananda), it all means that they have got no work to do. . . . Go from village to village, do good to humanity and to the world at large. Go to hell yourself to buy salvation for others. There is no Mukti (liberation) on earth to call my own. Whenever you think of yourself, you are bound to feel restless. What business have you to do with peace, my boy? You have renounced everything. Come! Now is the turn for you to banish the desire for peace, and that for Mukti too! Don't worry in the least; heaven or hell, or Bhakti (devotion) or Mukti—don't care for anything, but go, my boy, and spread the name of the Lord from door to door! It is only by doing good to others that one attains to one's own good, and it is by leading others to Bhakti and Mukti that one attains them oneself. Take that up, forget your own self for it, be mad over the idea. As Shri Ramakrishna used to love you, as I love you, come, love the world like that. Bring all together.

Where is Gunanidhi? You must have him with you. My infinite love to him. Where is Gupta (Sadananda)? Let him join if he likes. Call him in my name.

Remember these few points:

1. We are Sannyasins, who have given up *everything*—Bhakti, and Mukti, and enjoyment, and all.

2. To do the highest good to the world, everyone down to the lowest—this is our vow. Welcome Mukti or hell, whichever come of it.

3. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa came for the good of the world. Call him a man, or God, or an Incarnation, just as you please. Accept him each in your own light.

4. He who will bow before Him will be converted into purest gold that very moment. Go with this message from door to door, if you can, my boy, and all your disquietude will be at an end. Never fear—where's the room for fear?—Caring for nothing whatsoever is a part of your life. You have so long spread his name and your character all around, well and good. Now spread them in an organized way. The

Lord is with you. Take heart!

Whether I live or die, whether I go back to India or not, you go on spreading love, love that knows no bounds. Put S—, too, to this task. But remember one needs weapons to overcome others. सन्निमित्ते वरं त्यागो विनाशे नियते सति—"When death is so certain, it is better to die for a good cause."

Yours affly.,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Remember my previous letter—we want both men and women. There is no distinction of sex in the soul. It won't do merely to call Shri Ramakrishna an Incarnation, you must manifest power. Where are Gour-Mâ, Yogin-Mâ, and Golap-Mâ?[1] Tell them to spread these ideas. We want thousands of men, and thousands of women, who will spread like wild fire from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from the North Pole to the South Pole—all over the world. It is no use indulging in child's play—neither is there time for it. Let those who have come for child's play be off now, while there is time, or they will surely come to grief. We want an organization. Off with laziness. Spread! Spread! Run like fire to all places. Do not depend upon me. Whether I live or die, go on spreading yourselves.

Yours affly.
VIVEKANANDA.

47

CHICAGO,
20th June, 1894.

DEAR DEWANJI SAHEB,

Your very kind note came today. I am so sorry that I could have caused pain to such a noble heart as yours with my rash and strong words. I bow down to your mild corrections. "Thy son am I, teach me thus bowing"—*Gita*. But you well know, Dewanji Saheb, it was my love that prompted me to say so. The backbiters, I must tell you, have not indirectly benefited me; on the other hand, they have injured me immensely in view of the fact that our Hindu people did not move a finger to tell the Americans that I represented them. Had our people sent some words thanking the American people for their kindness to me and stating that I was representing them! Mr. Mazoomdar and a man, called Nagarkar from Bombay and a Christian girl, called Sarabai from Poona have been telling the American people that I have donned the Sannyasin's garb only in America and that I was a cheat, bare and simple. So far as reception goes, it has no effect on the American nation; but so far as helping me with funds goes, it has a terrible effect in making them take off their helping hands from me. And it is one year since I have been here, and not one man of note from India has thought it fit to make the Americans know that I am no *cheat*. There again the missionaries are always seeking for something against me, and they are busy picking up anything said against me by the Christian papers of India and publishing it here. Now you must know that the people here know very little of the distinction in India between the Christian and the Hindu.

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[1] All women disciples of Shri Ramakrishna.

Primarily my coming has been to raise funds for an enterprise of my own. Let me tell it all to you again.

The whole difference between the West and the East is in this: They are nations, we are not, i.e. civilization, education here is general, it penetrates into the masses. The higher classes in India and America are the same, but the distance is infinite between the lower classes of the two countries. Why was it so easy for the English to conquer India? It was because they are a nation, we are not. When one of our great men dies, we must sit for centuries to have another; they can produce them as fast as they die. When our Dewanji Saheb will pass away (which the Lord may delay long for the good of my country) the nation will see the difficulty at once of filling his place, which is seen even now in the fact that they cannot dispense with your services. It is the dearth of great ones. Why so? Because they have such a bigger field of recruiting their great ones, we have so small. A nation of 300 millions has the smallest field of recruiting its great ones compared with nations of thirty, forty, or sixty millions, because the number of educated men and women in those nations is so great. Now do not mistake me, my kind friend, this is the great defect in our nation and must be removed.

Educate and raise the masses, and thus alone a nation is possible. Our reformers do not see where the wound is, they want to save the nation by marrying the widows; do you think that a nation is saved by the number of husbands its widows get? Nor is our religion to blame, for an idol more or less makes no difference. The whole defect is here: The real nation who live in cottages have forgotten their manhood, their individuality. Trodden under the foot of the Hindu, Mussalman, or Christian, they have come to think that they are born to be trodden under the foot of everybody who has money enough in his pocket. They are to be given back their lost individuality. They are to be educated. Whether idols will remain or not, whether widows will have husbands enough or not, whether caste is good or bad, I do not bother myself with such questions. Everyone must work out his own salvation. Our duty is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will come through God's laws. Let us put ideas into their heads, and they will do the rest. Now this means educating the masses. Here are these difficulties. A pauper government cannot, will not, do anything, so no help from that quarter.

Even supposing we are in a position to open schools in each village free, still the poor boys would rather go to the plough to earn their living than come to your school. Neither have we the money, nor can we make them come to education. The problem seems hopeless. I have found a way out. It is this. If the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor cannot come to education, education must reach them at the plough, in the factory, everywhere. How? You have seen my brethren. Now I can get hundreds of such, all over India, unselfish, good, and educated. Let these men go from village to village bringing not only religion to the door of everyone but also education. So I have a nucleus of organizing the widows also as instructors to our women.

Now suppose the villagers after their day's work have come to their village and sitting under a tree or somewhere are smoking and talking the time away. Suppose two of these educated Sannyasins get hold of them there and with a camera throw astronomical or other pictures, scenes from different nations, histories, etc. Thus with globes, maps, etc.—and all this orally—how much can be done that way, Dewanji? It is not that the eye is the only door of knowledge, the ear can do all the same. So they would have ideas and morality and hope for better. Here our work ends. Let them do the rest. What would make the Sannyasins do this sacrifice, undertake such a task?—religious enthusiasm. Every new religious wave requires a new centre. The old religion can only be revivified by a new centre. Hang your dogmas or doctrines, they never pay. It is a character, a life, a centre, a God-man that must lead the way, that must be the centre round which all other elements will father themselves and then fall like a tidal wave upon the society, carrying all before it, washing away all impurities. Again, a piece of wood can only easily be cut along the grain. So the old Hinduism can only be reformed through Hinduism, and not through the new-fangled reform movements. At the same time the reformers must be able to unite in themselves the culture of both the East and the West. Now do you not think that you have already seen the nucleus of such a great movement, that you have heard the low rumblings of the coming tidal wave? That centre, that God-man to lead was born in India. He was the great Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, and round him this band is slowly gathering. They will do the work. Now, Dewanji Maharaj, this requires an organization, money—a little at least to set the wheel in motion. Who would have given us money in India?—So, Dewanji Maharaj, I crossed over to America. You may remember I begged all the money from the poor, and the offers of the rich I would not accept because they could not understand my ideas. Now lecturing for a year in this country, I could not succeed at all (of course, I have no wants for myself) in my plan for raising some funds for setting up my work. First, this year is a very bad year in America; thousands of their poor are without work. Secondly, the missionaries and the — try to thwart all my views. Thirdly, a year has rolled by, and our countrymen could not even do so much for me as to say to the American people that

I was a real Sannyasin and no cheat, and that I represented the Hindu religion. Even this much, the expenditure of a few words, they could not do! Bravo, my countrymen! I love them, Dewanji Saheb. Human help I spurn with my foot. He who has been with me through hills and dales, through deserts or forests, will be with me, I hope; if not, some heroic soul would arise some time or other in India, far abler than myself and carry it out. So I have told you all about it. Dewanji, excuse my long letter, my noble friend, one of the few who really feel for me, have real kindness for me. You are at liberty, my friend, to think that I am a dreamer, a visionary; but believe at least that I am sincere to the backbone, and my greatest fault is that I love my country only too, too well. May you and yours be blessed ever and ever, my noble, noble friend. May the shadow of the Almighty ever rest on all those you love. I offer my eternal gratitude to you. My debt to you is immense, not only because you are my friend, but also because you have all your life served the Lord and your motherland so well.

Ever yours in gratitude,
VIVEKANANDA.

48

CHICAGO,
23rd June, 1894.

YOUR HIGHNESS,[1]

Shri Nârâyana bless you and yours. Through your Highness' kind help, it has been possible for me to come to this country. Since then I have become well known here, and the hospitable people of this country have supplied all my wants. It is a wonderful country and this is a wonderful nation in many respects. No other nation applies so much machinery in their everyday work as do the people of this country. Everything is machine. Then again, they are only one-twentieth of the whole population of the world. Yet they have fully one-sixth of all the wealth of the world. There is no limit to their wealth and luxuries. Yet everything here is so dear. The wages of labour are the highest in the world, yet the fight between labour and capital is constant.

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[1] **H. H. The Maharaja of Mysore.**

Nowhere on earth have women so many privileges as in America. They are slowly taking everything into their hands and, strange to say, the number of cultured women is much greater than that of cultured men. Of course the higher geniuses are mostly from the rank of males. With all the criticism of the Westerners against our caste, they have a worse one—that of money. The almighty dollar, as the Americans say, can do anything here.

No country on earth has so many laws, and in no country are they so little regarded. On the whole our poor Hindu people are infinitely more moral than any of the Westerners. In religion they practise either hypocrisy or fanaticism. Sober-minded men have become disgusted with their superstitious religions and are looking forward to India for new light. Your Highness cannot realize without seeing, how eagerly they take in any little bit of the grand thoughts of the holy Vedas, which resist and are unharmed by the terrible onslaughts of modern science. The theories of creation out of nothing, of a created soul, and of the big tyrant of a God sitting on a throne in a place called heaven, and of the eternal hell-fires have disgusted all the educated; and the noble thoughts of the Vedas about the eternity of creation and of the soul, and about the God in our own soul, they are imbibing fast in one shape or other. Within fifty years the educated of the world will come to believe in the eternity of both soul and creation, and in God as our highest and perfect nature, as taught in our holy Vedas. Even now their learned priests are interpreting the Bible that way. My conclusion is that they require more spiritual civilization, and we, more material.

The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils; compared with them, ours are angels, and it is therefore so much the easier to raise our poor. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. That is the great task between our people and princes. Up to now nothing has been done in that direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man, every woman, must work out one's own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, they will do the rest. This is what is to be done in India. It is this idea that has been in my mind for a long time. I could not accomplish it in India, and that was the reason of my coming to this country. The great difficulty in the way of educating the poor is this. Supposing even your Highness opens a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is such, that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields, or otherwise try to make a living than come to the school. Now, if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing Sannyasins in our own country, going from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be organized as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps, etc. They can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a lifetime through books. This requires an organization, which again means money. Men enough there are in India to work out this plan, but alas! they have no money. It is very difficult to set a wheel in motion, but when once set, it goes on with increasing velocity. After seeking help in my own country and failing to get any sympathy from the rich, I came over to this country through your Highness' aid. The Americans do not care a bit whether the poor of India die or live. And why should they, when our own people never think of anything but their own selfish ends?

My noble prince, this life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive. One such high, noble-minded and royal son of India as your Highness can do much towards raising India on her feet again, and thus leave a name to posterity which shall be worshipped. That the Lord may make your noble heart feel intensely for the suffering millions of India sunk in ignorance, is the prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.

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C/o GEORGE W. HALE, ESQ.,
541 DEARBORN AVENUE, CHICAGO,
26th June, 1894.

DEAR SISTERS,[1]

The great Hindi poet Tulsidas, in his benediction to the translation of the Râmâyana, says, "I bow down to both the wicked and holy; but alas! for me, they are both equally torturers—the wicked begin to torture me as soon as they come in contact with me—the good, alas! take my life away when they leave me."

I say amen to this. To me, for whom the only pleasure and love left in the world is to love the holy ones of God, it is a mortal torture to separate myself from them. But these things must come. Thou Music of my Beloved's flute, lead on, I am following. It is impossible to express my pain, my anguish at being separated from you, noble and sweet and generous and holy ones. Oh! how I wish I had succeeded in becoming a Stoic!

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[1] Misses Mary and H. Hale.

Hope you are enjoying the beautiful village scenery. "Where the world is awake, there the man of self-control is sleeping. Where the world sleeps, there he is waking."

May even the dust of the world never touch you, for, after all the poets say, it is only a piece of carrion covered over with garlands. Touch it not—if you can. Come up, young ones of the bird of Paradise,[1] before your feet touch the cesspool of corruption, this world, and fly upwards.

"O thou that art awake, do not go to sleep again."

"Let the world love its many, we have but one Beloved—the Lord. We care not what they say; we are only afraid when they want to paint our Beloved and give Him all sorts of monstrous qualities. Let them do whatever they please—for us He is only the beloved—my love, my love, and nothing more."

"Who cares to know how much power, how much quality He has—even that of doing good! We will say once for all: We love not for the long purse, we never sell our love, we want not, we give."

"You, philosopher, come to tell us of His essence, His powers, His attributes—fool! we are here dying for a kiss of His lips."

"Take your nonsense back to your own home and send me a kiss of my Love—can you?"

"Fool! whom art thou bending thy tottering knees before, in awe and fear? I took my necklace and put it round His neck; and tying a string to it as a collar, I am dragging Him along with me, for fear He may fly away even for a moment—that necklace was the collar of love, that string the ecstasy of love. Fool you know not the secret—the Infiite One comes within my fist under the bondage of love. Knowest thou not that the Mover of the Universe used to dance to the music of the ringing bracelets of the shepherdesses of Vrindaban?"

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[1] A bird of Bengali folklore which is fabled to live exclusively in the atmosphere and whose eggs, laid high up in the air, are hatched during the steep fall towards the ground, and the young ones fly upwards before they touch the earth. Shri Ramakrishna used to compare the eternally liberated souls to these young birds.

Excuse my mad scribbling, excuse my foolery in trying to express the inexpressible. It is to be felt only.

Ever with blessings, your brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

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541 DEARBORN AVE.,
CHICAGO,
28th June, 1894

DEAR——,[1]

The other day I received a letter from G. G., Mysore. G. G. unfortunately thinks that I am all-knowing, else he would have written his Canarese address on the top of the letter more legibly. Then again it is a great mistake to address me letters to any other place but Chicago. It was my mistake of course at first, because I ought to have thought of the fine Buddhi (intellect) of our friends who are throwing letters at me anywhere they find an address at the top. But tell our Madras Brihaspatis (i.e. wise fellows) that they already knew full well that before their letters reach, I may be 1000 miles away from that particular place, for I am continuously travelling. In Chicago there is a friend whose house is my headquarters.

Now as to my prospects here—it is wellnigh zero. Why, because although I had the best purpose, it has been made null and void by these causes. All that I get about India is from Madras letters. Your letters say again and again how I am being praised in India. But that is between you and me, for I never saw a single Indian paper writing about me, except the three square inches sent to me by Alasinga. On the other hand everything that is said by Christians in India is sedulously gathered by the missionaries and regularly published, and they go from door to door to make my friends give me up. They have succeeded only too well, for there is not one word for me from India. Indian Hindu papers may laud me to the skies, but not a word of that ever came to America, so that many people in this country think me a fraud. In the face of the missionaries and with the jealousy of the Hindus here to back them I have not a word to say. I now think it was foolish of me to go to the Parliament on the strength of the urging of the Madras boys. They are boys after all. Of course I am eternally obliged to them, but they are after all enthusiastic young men without any executive abilities. I came here without credentials. How else to show that I am not a fraud in the face of the missionaries and the Brahmo Samaj? Now, I thought nothing so easy as to spend a few words: I thought nothing would be so easy as to hold a meeting of some respectable persons in Madras and Calcutta and pass a resolution thanking me and the American people for being kind to me and sending it over officially, i.e. through the Secretary of the function, to America, for instance, sending one to Dr. Barrows and asking him to publish it in the papers and so on, to different papers of Boston, New York, and Chicago. Now after all I found that it is too terrible a task for India to undertake. There has not been one voice for me in one year and every one against me, for whatever you may say of me in your homes, who knows anything of it here? More than two months ago I wrote to Alasinga about this. He did not even answer my letter. I am afraid his heart has grown lukewarm. So you must first think of that and then show this letter to the Madras people. On the other hand, my brethren foolishly talk nonsense about Keshab Sen; and the Madrasis, telling the Theosophists anything I write about them, are creating only enemies. . . . Oh! If only I had one man of some true abilities and brains to back me in India! But His will be done. I stand a fraud in this country. It was my foolishness to go to the Parliament without any credentials, hoping that there would be many for me. I have got to work it out slowly.

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[1] A disciple of Madras.

On the whole the Americans are a million times nobler than the Hindus, and I can work more good here than in the country of the ingrate and the heartless. After all, I must work my Karma out. So far as pecuniary circumstances go, I am all right and will be all right. The number of Theosophists in all America is only 625 by the last census.

Mixing up with them will smash me in a minute rather than help me in any way. What nonsense does Alasinga mean by my going to London to see Mr. Old etc. Fool! the boys there don't know what they are talking. And this pack of Madrasi babies cannot even keep a counsel in their blessed noodles! Talk nonsense all day, and when it comes to the least business, they are nowhere! Boobies, who cannot get up a few meetings of 50 men each and send up a few empty *words* only to help me, talk big about influencing the world.

I have written to you about the phonograph. Now there is here an electric fan costing $20 and working beautifully. The battery works 100 hours and then can be replenished at any electric plant.

Good-bye, I have had enough of the Hindus. Now His will be done, I obey and bow down to my Karma. However, do not think me ungrateful. . . . The Madras people have done for me more than I deserved and more than was in their power. It was my foolishness—the forgetting for a moment that we Hindus have not yet become human beings, and giving up for a moment my self-reliance and relying upon the Hindus—that I came to grief. Every moment I expected something from India. No, it never came. Last two months especially I was in torture at every moment. No, not even a newspaper from India! My friends waited—waited month after month; nothing came, not a voice. Many consequently grew cold and at last gave me up. But it is the punishment for relying upon man and upon brutes, for our countrymen are not men as yet. They are ready to be praised, but when their turn comes even to say a word, they are nowhere.

My thanks eternal to the Madras young men. May the Lord bless them for ever. America is the best field in the world to carry on any idea, so I do not think of leaving America soon. And why? Here I have food and drink and clothes, and everybody so kind, and all this for a few good words! Why should I give up such a noble nation to go to the land of brutes and ingrates and the brainless boobies held in eternal thraldom of superstition, merciless, pitiless wretches? So good-bye again. You may show this letter to the people with discretion. I do not think the Madrasis have shown much discretion, even Alasinga upon whom I built so much. By the bye, will you kindly send up a few copies of the sketch of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's life written by Mazoomdar to Chicago? They have lots in Calcutta. Don't forget the address, 541 Dearborn Avenue (not Street), Chicago, or C/o Thomas Cook, Chicago. Any other address would cause much delay and confusion, as I am continually travelling and Chicago is my headquarters, although even this much did not come to the brains of our Madras friends. Kindly give G. G., Alasinga, Secretary, and all others my eternal blessings. I am always praying for their welfare, and I am not in the least displeased with them, but I am not pleased with myself. I committed a terrible error—of calculating upon others' help—once in my life—and I have paid for it. It was my fault and not theirs. Lord bless all the Madras people. They are at least far superior to the Bengalis, who are simply fools and have no souls, no stamina at all. Good-bye, good-bye. I have launched my boat in the waves, come what may. Regarding my brutal criticisms, I have really no right to make them. You have done for me infinitely more than I deserve. I must bear my own Karma, and that without a murmur. Lord bless you all.

Yours truly,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. I am afraid Alasinga's college has closed, but I had no intimation of it, and he never gave me his home address. Kidi has dropped out, I am afraid.

V.

51

C/o Dr. E. Guernsey,
Fishkill Landing, N. Y.,
July, 1894.

Dear Mother,[1]

I came yesterday to this place, and shall remain here a few days. I received in New York a letter from you but did not receive any *Interior,* for which I am glad, because I am not perfect yet, and knowing the "unselfish love" the Presbyterian priests, especially the *Interior* has for "me", I want to keep aloof from rousing bad feelings towards these "sweet Christian gentlemen" in my heart. Our religion teaches that anger is a great sin, even if it is "righteous". Each must follow his own religion. I could not for my soul distinguish ever the distinction between "religious anger" and "common-place anger", "religious killing and commonplace killing", "religious slandering and irreligious", and so forth. Nor may that "fine" ethical distinction ever enter into the ethics of our nation! Jesting apart, Mother Church, I do not care the least for the gambols these men play, seeing as I do through and through the insincerity, the hypocrisy, and love of self and name that is the *only motive power* in these men.

As to the photographs, the first time the Babies got a few copies, and the second time you brought a few copies, you know they are to give 50 copies in all. Sister Isabelle knows better than I.

With my sincerest love and respects for you and Father Pope,

I remain, yours,
Vivekananda.

P.S. How are you enjoying the heat? I am bearing the heat very well here. I had an invitation to Swampscott on the sea from a very rich lady whose acquaintance I made last winter in New York, but I declined with thanks. I am very careful now to take the hospitality of anybody here, especially the rich. I had a few other invitations from some very rich people here. I refused; I have by this time seen the whole business through. Lord bless you and yours, Mother Church, for your sincerity. Oh! it is so rare in this world.

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[1] Mrs. George W. Hale of Chicago.

Yours affectionately,
V.

52

New York,
9th July(?), *1894*.

O My Sisters,[1]

Glory unto Jagadamba (Mother of the Universe)! I have gained beyond expectations. The prophet has been honoured[2] and with a *vengeance*. I am weeping like a child at His mercy—He never leaves His servant, sisters. The letter I send you will explain all, and the printed things are coming to the American people. The names there are the very flower of our country. The President was the chief *nobleman* of Calcutta, and the other man Mahesh Chandra Nyâyaratna is the principal of the Sanskrit College and the chief Brahmin in all India and recognized by the Government as such. The letter will tell you all. O Sisters! What a rogue am I that in the face of such mercies sometimes the faith totters—seeing every moment that I am in His hands. Still the mind sometimes gets despondent. Sisters, there is a *God*—a Father—a *Mother* who never leaves His children, never, never, never. Put uncanny theories aside and becoming children take refuge in Him. I cannot write more—I am weeping like a woman.

Blessed, blessed art Thou, Lord God of my soul!

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

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[1] The Hale sisters of Chicago.

[2] Refers to the public meeting held in Calcutta (September 5, 1894 appreciating Swami Vivekananda's work in America.

53

U. S. A.,
11th July, 1894.

DEAR ALASINGA,

You must never write to me anywhere else but 541 Dearborn Ave., Chicago. Your last letter has travelled the whole country to come to me, and this was only because I am so well known. Some of the resolutions are to be sent to Dr. Barrows with a letter thanking him for his kindness to me and asking him to publish the letter in some American newspapers—as that would be the best refutation of the false charges of the missionaries, that I do not represent anybody. Learn business, my boy. We will do great things yet! Last year I only sowed the seeds; this year I mean to reap. In the meanwhile, keep up as much enthusiasm as possible in India. Let Kidi go his own way. He will come out all right in time. I have taken his responsibility. He has a perfect right to his own opinion. Make him write for the paper; that will keep him in good temper. My blessings on him.

Start the journal and I will send you articles from time to time. You must send a paper and a letter to Professor J. H. Wright of Harvard University, Boston, thanking him as having been the first man who stood as my friend and asking him to publish it in the papers, thus giving the lie to the missionaries.

In the Detroit lecture I got $900, i.e. Rs. 2,700. In other lectures, I earned in one $2,500, i.e. Rs. 7,500 in one hour, but got only 200 dollars! I was cheated by a roguish Lecture Bureau. I have given them up. I spent a good deal here; only about $3,000 remain.

I shall have to print much matter next year. I am going regularly to work. . . . The sheer power of the *will* will do everything. . . . You must organize a society which should regularly meet, and write to me about it as often as you can. In fact, get up as much enthusiasm as you can. Only, *beware* of falsehood. Go to work, my boys, the fire will come to you. The faculty of organization is entirely absent in our nature, but this has to be infused. The great secret is—absence of jealousy. Be always ready to concede to the opinions of your brethren, and try always to conciliate. That is the whole secret. Fight on bravely! Life is short! Give it up to a great cause. Why do you not write anything about Narasimha? He is almost starving. I gave him something. Then he went over to somewhere, I do not know where, and does not write. Akshaya is a good boy. I like him very much. No use quarrelling with the Theosophists. Do not go and tell them all I write to you. . . . Theosophists are our pioneers, do you know? Now Judge is a Hindu and Col. a Buddhist, and Judge is the ablest man here. Now tell the Hindu Theosophists to support Judge. Even if you can write Judge a letter, thanking him as a co-religionist and for his labours in presenting Hinduism before Americans, that will do his heart much good. We must not join any sect, but we must sympathize and work with each. . . . Work, work—conquer all by your love! . . .

Try to expand. Remember the *only sign of life* is motion and growth. You must send the passed resolution to Dr. J. H. Barrows . . ., Dr. Paul Carus . . ., Senator Palmar . . ., Mrs. J. J. Bagley. . . ., it must come officially. . . . I write this because I do not think you know the ways of foreign nations. . . . Keep on steadily. So far we have done wonderful things. Onward, brave souls, we will gain! Organize and found societies and go to work, that is the only way.

At this time of the year there is not much lecturing to be done here; so I will devote myself to my pen and write. I shall be hard at work all the time, and then, when the cold weather comes and people return to their homes, I shall begin lecturing again, and at the same time organize societies.

My love and blessings to you all. I never forget anybody, though I do not write often. Then again, I am now continuously travelling, and letters have to be redirected from one place to another.

Work hard. Be holy and pure and the fire will come.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

54

SWAMPSCOTT,
26th July, 1894.

DEAR BABIES,[1]

Now don't let my letters stray beyond the circle, please. I had a beautiful letter from Sister Mary. See how I am getting the dash, Sister Jeany teaches me all that. She can jump and run and play and swear like a devil and talk slang at the rate of 500 a minute; only she does not much care for religion, only a little. She is gone today home, and I am going to Greenacre. I had been to see Mrs. Breed. Mrs. Stone was there, with whom is residing Mrs. Pullman and all the golden bugs, my old freinds hereabouts. They are kind as usual. On my way back from Greenacre I am going to Annisquam to see Mrs. Bagley for a few days. Darn it, I forget everything. I had duckings in the sea like a fish. I am enjoying every bit of it. What nonsense was the song Harriet taught me "dans la plaine"; the deuce take it. I told it to a French scholar, and he laughed and laughed till the fellow was wellnigh burst at my wonderful translation. That is the way you would have taught me French. You are a pack of fools and heathens, I tell you. Now are you gasping for breath like a huge fish stranded? I am glad that you are sizzling. Oh! how nice and cool it is here, and it is increased a hundredfold when I think about the gasping, sizzling, boiling, frying four old maids, and how cool and nice I am here. Whoooooo!

Miss Phillips has a beautiful place somewhere in N. Y. State—mountain, lake, river, forest altogether—what more? I am going to make a Himalayas there and start a monastery as sure as I am living—I am not going to leave this country without throwing one more apple of discord into this already roaring, fighting, kicking, mad whirlpool of American religion. Well, dear old maids, you sometimes have a glimpse of the lake and on every hot noon, think of going down to the bottom of the lake, down, down, down, until it is cool and nice, and then to lie down on the bottom, with that coolness above and around, and lie there still, silent, and just doze—not sleep, but dreamy dozing half unconscious sort of bliss—very much like that which opium brings; that is delicious; and drinking lots of iced water. Lord bless my soul—I had such cramps several times as would have killed an elephant. So I hope to keep myself away from the cold water.

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[1] The Hale sisters.

May you be all happy, dear *fin de siècle* young ladies, is the constant prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.

55

GREENACRE INN,
ELLIOT, MAINE,
31st July, 1894.

DEAR SISTERS,[1]

I have not written you long, and I have not much to write. This is a big inn and farm-house where the Christian Scientists are holding a session. Last spring in New York I was invited by the lady projector of the meeting to come here, and after all I am here. It is a beautiful and cool place, no doubt, and many of my old friends of Chicago are here. Mrs. Mills, Miss Stockham, and several other ladies and gentlemen live in tents which they have pitched on the open ground by the river. They have a lively time, and sometimes all of them wear what you call your scientific dress the whole day. They have lectures almost every day. One Mr. Colville from Boston is here; he speaks every day, it is said, under spirit control. The editor (?) of the *Universal Truth* has settled herself down here. She is conducting religious services and holding classes to heal all manner of diseases, and very soon I expect them to be giving eyes to the blind, and the like! After all, it is a queer gathering. They do not care much about social laws and are quite free and happy. Mr. Mills is quite brilliant, and so are many other ladies. . . . Another day from Detroit—very cultured and with beautiful black eyes and long hair—is going to take me to an island fifteen miles out at sea. I hope we shall have a nice time. . . . I may go over to Annisquam from here, I suppose. This is a beautiful and nice place and the bathing is splendid. Cora Stockham has made a bathing dress for me, and I am having as good a time in the water as a duck—this is delicious even for the denizens of mud Ville. I do not find anything more to write. Only I am so busy that I cannot find time enough to write to Mother Church separately. My love and respects to Miss Howe.

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[1] The Hale sisters.

There is here Mr. Wood of Boston who is one of the great lights of your sect. But he objects to belong to the sect of Mrs. Whirlpool. So he calls himself a mental healer of metaphysico-chemico-physico-religiosio what not! Yesterday, there was a tremendous cyclone which gave a good "treatment" to the tents. The big tent under which they had the lectures had developed so much spirituality, under the "treatment", that it entirely disappeared from mortal gaze, and about two hundred chairs were dancing about the grounds under spiritual ecstacy! Mrs. Figs of Mills company gives a class every morning; and Mrs. Mills is jumping all about the place; they are all in high spirits. I am especially glad for Cora, for they have suffered a good deal last winter and a little hilarity would do her good. You will be astounded with the liberty they enjoy in the camps, but they are very good and pure people there—a little erratic and that is all. I shall be here till Saturday next. . . .

. . . The other night the camp people went to sleep beneath a pine tree under which I sit every morning *â la* Hindu and talk to them. Of course I went with them, and we had a nice night under the stars, sleeping on the lap of mother earth, and I enjoyed every bit of it. I cannot describe to you that night's glories—after a year of brutal life that I have led, to sleep on the ground, to meditate under the tree in the forest! The inn people are more or less well-to-do, and the camp people are healthy, young *sincere*, and holy men and women. I teach them, *Shivoham, Shivoham,* and they all repeat it, innocent and pure as they are and brave beyond all bounds. And so I am happy and glorified. Thank God for making me poor, thank God for making these children in the tents poor. The Dudes and Dudines are in the Hotel, but iron-bound nerves and souls of triple steel and spirits of fire are in the camp. If you had seen them yesterday, when the rain was falling in torrents and the cyclone was overturning everything, hanging by their tent strings to keep them from being blown down, and standing on the majesty of their souls —these brave ones—it would have done your hearts good. I will go a hundred miles to see the like of them. Lord bless them! I hope you are enjoying your nice village life. Never be anxious for a moment. I *will* be taken care of, and if not, I *will* know my time has come and shall pass out.

"Sweet One! Many people offer to You many things, I am poor—but I have the body, mind, and soul. I give them over to You. Deign to accept, Lord of the Universe, and refuse them not."—So have I given over my life and soul once for all. One thing—they are a dry sort of people here—and as to that very few in the whole world are there that are not. They do not understand "Mâdhava", the Sweet One. They are either intellectual or go after faith cure, table turning, witchcraft, etc., etc. Nowhere have I heard so much about "love, life, and liberty" as in this country, but nowhere is it less understood. Here God is either a terror or a healing power, vibration, and so forth. Lord bless their souls! And these parrots talk day and night of love and love and love!

Now, good dreams, good thoughts for you. You are good and noble. Instead of materializing the spirit, that is dragging the spiritual to the material plane as these folks do, convert the matter into spirit, catch a glimpse at least, every day, of that world of infinite beauty and peace and purity—the spiritual, and try to live in it day and night. Seek not, touch not with your toes even, anything that is uncanny. Let your souls ascend day and night like an "unbroken string" unto the feet of the Beloved whose throne is in your own hearts and let the rest take care of themselves, that is the body and everything else. Life is evanescent, a fleeting dream, youth and beauty fade. Say day and night, "Thou art my father, my mother, my husband, my love, my lord, my God—I want nothing but Thee, nothing but Thee, nothing but Thee. Thou in me, I in Thee, I am Thee. Thou art me." Wealth goes, beauty vanishes, life flies, powers fly—but the Lord abideth for ever, love abideth for ever. If here is glory in keeping the machine in good trim, it is more glorious to withhold the soul from suffering with the body—that is the only demonstration of your being "not matter", by letting the matter alone.

Stick to God! Who cares what comes to the body or to anything else! Through the terrors of evil, say—my God, my love! Through the pangs of death, say—my God, my love! Through all the evils under the sun, say—my God, my love. Thou art here, I see Thee. Thou art with me, I feel Thee. I am Thine, take me. I am not of the world's but Thine, leave not then me. Do not go for glass beads leaving the mine of diamonds! This life is a great chance. What, seekest thou the pleasures of the world!—He is the fountain of all bliss. Seek for the highest, aim at that highest and you *shall* reach the highest.

Yours with all blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

56

U.S.A.,
31st August, 1894.

DEAR ALASINGA,

I just now saw an editorial on me about the circular from Madras in the *Boston Transcript*. Nothing has reached me yet. They will reach me soon if you have sent them already. So far you have done wonderfully, my boy. Do not mind what I write in some moments of nervousness. One gets nervous sometimes alone in a country 15,000 miles from home, having to fight every inch of ground with orthodox inimical Christians. You must take those into consideration, my brave boy, and work right along.

Perhaps you have heard from Bhattacharya that I received a beautiful letter from G. G. His address was scrawled in such a fashion as to become perfectly illegible to me. So I could not reply to him direct. But I have done all that he desired. I have sent over my photograph and written to the Raja of Mysore. Now I have sent a phonograph to Khetri Raja. . . .

Now send always Indian newspapers about me to me over here. I want to read them in the papers themselves—do you know? Now lastly, you must write to me all about Mr. Charu Chandra who has been so kind to me. Give him my heartfelt thanks; but (between you and me) I unfortunately do not remember him. Would you give me particulars?

The Theosophists here now like me, but they are 650 in all! There are the Christian Scientists. All of them like me. They are about a million. I work with both, but join none, and will with the Lord's grace mould them both after the true fashion, for they are after all mumbling half realized truth. Narasimha perhaps, by the time this reaches you, will get the money, etc.

I have received a letter from *Cat,* but it requires a book to answer all his queries. So I send him my blessings through you and ask you to remind him that we agree to differ—and see the harmony of contrary points. So it does not matter what he believes in; he must act.

Give my love to Balaji, G. G., Kidi, Doctor, and to all our friends and all the great and patriotic souls, who were brave and noble enough to sink their differences for their country's cause.

With a magazine or journal or organ—you become the Secretary thereof. You calculate the cost of starting the magazine and the work, how much the least is necessary to start it and then write to me giving name and address of the Society, and I will send you money myself and not only that, I will get others in America to subscribe anually to it liberally. So ask them of Calcutta to do the same. Give me Dharmapala's address. He is a great and good man. He will work wonderfully with us. Now organize a little Society. You will have to take charge of the whole movement, not as a *leader,* but as a *servant.* Do you know, the least show of leading destroys everything by rousing jealousy?

Accede to everything. Only try to retain all of my friends together. Do you see? And work slowly up. Let G. G. and others who have no immediate necessity for earning something, do, as they are doing, i.e. casting the idea broadcast. G. G. is doing well at Mysore. That is the way. Mysore will be in time a great stronghold.

I am now going to write my *mems* in a book, and *next* winter will go about this country organizing *Societies* here. This is a great field of work, and everything done here prepares *England*. So far you have done very well indeed, my brave boy—all strength shall be given to you.

I have now Rs. 9,000 with me, part of which I will send over to you for the organization; and I will get many people to send money to you in Madras yearly, half-yearly, or monthly. You now start a Society and a journal and the necessary apparatus. This must be a secret amongst only a few—but at the same time try to collect funds from Mysore and elsewhere to build a temple in Madras which should have a library and some rooms for the office and the preachers who should be Sannyâsins, and for Vairâgis (men of renunciation) who may chance to come. Thus we shall progress inch by inch. That is a great field for my work, and everything done here prepares the way for my coming work in England. . . .

You know the greatest difficulty with me is to keep or even to touch money. It is disgusting and debasing. So you must organize a Society to take charge of the practical and pecuniary part of it. I have friends here who take care of all my monetary concerns. Do you see? It will be a wonderful relief to me to get rid of horrid money affairs. So the sooner you organize yourselves and you be ready as Secretary and Treasurer to enter into direct communication with my friends and sympathisers here, the better for you and me. Do that quickly, and write to me. Give the Society a non-sectarian name. . . . Do you write to my brethren at the Math to organize in a similar fashion. . . . Great things are in store for you Alasinga. Or if you think proper, you get some of the big folks to be named as office-bearers of the Society, while you work in the real sense. Their name will be a great thing. If your duties are too severe and do not let you have any time, let G. G. do the business part, and by and by I hope to make you independent of your college work so that you may, without starving yourself and family, devote your whole soul to the work. So work, my boys, work! The rough part of the work has been smoothened and rounded, now it will roll on better and better every year. And if you can simply keep it going well until I come to India, the work will progress by leaps and bounds. Rejoice that you have done so much. When you feel gloomy, think what has been done within the last year. How, rising from nothing, we have the eyes of the world fixed upon us now. Not only India, but the world outside, is expecting great things of us. Missionaries or Mazoomdar or foolish officials—none will be able to resist truth and love and sincerity. Are you sincere? Unselfish even unto death, and loving? Then fear not, not even death. Onward, my lads! The whole world requires Light. It is expectant! India alone has that Light, not in magic mummeries, and charlatanism, but in the teaching of the glories of the spirit of real religion —of the highest spiritual truth. That is why the Lord has preserved the race through all its vicissitudes unto the present day. Now the time has come. Have faith that you are all, my brave lads, born to do great things! Let not the barks of puppies frighten you—no, not even the thunderbolts of heaven—but stand up and work!

Ever yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

57

U.S.A.,
21st September, 1894.

DEAR ALASINGA,

. . . I have been continuously travelling from place to place and working incessantly, giving lectures, holding classes, etc.

I have not been able to write a line yet for my proposed book. Perhaps I may be able to take it in hand later on. I have made some nice friends here amongst the liberal people, and a few amongst the orthodox. I hope to return soon to India. I have had enough of this country, and especially as too much work is making me nervous. The giving of too many public lectures and constant hurry have brought on this nervousness. I do not care for this busy, meaningless, money-making life. So you see, I will soon return. Of course, there is a growing section with whom I am very popular, and who will like to have me here all the time. But I think I have had enough of newspaper blazoning, and humbugging of a public life. I do not care the least for it. . . .

There is no hope for money for our project here. It is useless to hope. No large number of men in any country do good out of mere sympathy. The few who really give money in the Christian lands often do so through priestcraft and fear of hell. So it is as in our Bengali proverb, "Kill a cow and make a pair of shoes out of the leather and give them in charity to a Brâhmana". So it is here, and so everywhere; and then, the Westerners are miserly in comparison with our race. I sincerely believe that the Asians are the most charitable race in the world, only they are very poor.

I am going to live for a few months in New York. That city is the head, hand, and purse of the country. Of course, Boston is called the Brahmanical city, and here in America there are hundreds of thousands that sympathize with me. . . . The New York people are very open. I will see what can be done there, as I have some very influential friends. After all, I am getting disgusted with this lecturing business. It will take a long time for the Westerners to understand the higher spirituality. Everything is £. s. d. to them. If a religion brings them money or health or beauty or long life, they will all flock to it, otherwise not. . . .

Give to Balaji, G. G., and all of your friends my best love.

Yours with everlasting love,
VIVEKANANDA.

58*

New York,
25th September, 1894.

My Dear—,[1]

Glad to receive some letters from you. It gives me great pleasure to learn that Shashi and others are making a stir. We must create a stir, nothing short of this will do. You will be throwing the whole world into convulsions. Victory to the Guru. You know, श्रेयांसि बहुविघ्नानि—"Great undertakings are always fraught with many obstacles." It is these obstacles which knock and shape great characters. . . . Is it in the power of missionaries and people of that sort to withstand this shock? . . . Should a fool succeed where scholars have failed? It is no go, my boy, set your mind at ease about that. In every attempt there will be one set of men who will applaud, and another who will pick holes. Go on doing your own work, what need have you to reply to any party? सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं, सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः—"Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through Truth lies the path of Devayâna." . . . Everything will come about by degrees.

Here in summer they go to the seaside; I also did the same. They have got almost a mania for boating and yatching. The yacht is a kind of light vessel which everyone, young and old, who has the means, possesses. They set sail in them every day to the sea, and return home to eat and drink and dance—while music continues day and night. Pianos render it a botheration to stay indoors!

I shall now tell you something of the Hales to whose address you direct my letters. He and his wife are an old couple, having two daughters, two nieces, and a son. The son lives abroad where he earns a living. The daughters live at home. In this country, relationship is through the girls. The son marries and no longer belongs to the family, but the daughter's husband pays frequent visits to his father-in-law's house. They say,

> "Son is son till he gets a wife;
> The daughter is daughter all her life."

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[1] Meant for his brother-disciples.

All the four are young and not yet married. Marriage is a very troublesome business here. In the first place, one must have a husband after one's heart. Secondly, he must be a moneyed man. . . . They will probably live unmarried; besides, they are now full of renunciation through my contact and are busy with thoughts of Brahman!

The two daughters are blondes, that is, have golden hair, while the two nieces are brunettes, that is, of dark hair. They know all sorts of occupations. The nieces are not so rich, they conduct a kindergarten school; but the daughters do not earn. Many girls of this country earn their living. Nobody depends upon others. Even millionaires' sons earn their living; but they marry and have separate establishments of their own. The daughters call me brother; and I address their mother as mother. All my things are at their place; and they look after them, wherever I may go. Here the boys go in search of a living while quite young; and the girls are educated in the universities. So you will find that in a meeting there will be ninety-nine per cent of girls. The boys are nowhere in comparison with them.

There are a good many spiritualists in this country. The medium is one who induces the spirit. He goes behind a screen; and out of this come ghosts of all sizes and all colours. I have witnessed some cases; but they seemed to be a hoax. I shall test some more before I come to a final conclusion. Many of the spiritualists respect me.

Next comes Christian Science. They form the most influential party, nowadays, figuring everywhere. They are spreading by leaps and bounds, and causing heartburn to the orthodox. They are Vedantins; I mean, they have picked up a few doctrines of the Advaita and grafted them upon the Bible. And they cure diseases by proclaiming "Soham, Soham" —"I am He! I am He!"—through strength of mind. They all admire me highly.

Nowadays the orthodox section of this country are crying for help. "Devil worship"[1] is but a thing of the past. They are mortally afraid of me and exclaim, "What a pest? Thousands of men and women follow him! He is going to root out orthodoxy!" Well, the torch has been applied and the conflagration that has set in through the grace of the Guru will not be put out. In course of time the bigots will have their breath knocked out of them. . . .

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[1] The Orthodox Christians brand Hindus and people of other religions with this name and look upon them with scorn.

The Theosophists have not much power. But they, too, are dead against the orthodox section.

This Christian Science is exactly like our Kartâbhajâ[1] sect: Say, "I have no disease", and you are whole; and say, "I am He"—"Soham"—and you are quits—be at large. This is a thoroughly materialistic country. The people of this Christian land will recognize religion if only you can cure diseases, work miracles, and open up avenues to money; and they understand little of anything else. But there are honourable exceptions. . . .

People here have found a new type of man in me. Even the orthodox are at their wit's end. And people are now looking up to me with an eye of reverence. Is there a greater strength than that of Brahmacharya—purity, my boy?

I am now busy writing a reply to the Madras Address, which was published in all the newspapers here and created a sensation. If it be cheap, I shall send it in print, but if dear, I shall send a type-written copy. To you also I shall send a copy; have it published in the *Indian Mirror*.

The unmarried girls of this country are very good and have a good deal of self-respect. . . . These (the people) are come of Virochana's[2] race. To them ministering to the body is a great thing: they would trim and polish and give their whole attention to that. A thousand instruments for paring nails, ten thousand for hair-cutting, and who can count the varieties of dress and toilet and perfumery? . . . They are good-natured, kind, and truthful. All is right with them, but that enjoyment is their God. It is a country where money flows like a river, with beauty as its ripple and learning its waves, and which rolls in luxury.

कांक्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः।
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥

[1] An offshoot of degenerate Vaishnavism, calling God "Kartâ", or Master, and noted for efficiency in faith-cure.

[2] The King of the Asuras and son of the saintly Prahlâda. He went to Brahmâ for Self-knowledge, but misunderstanding His teaching turned a materialist. (Chhândogya Upanishad, VIII).

—"Longing for success in action, in this world, (men) worship the deities. For success is quickly attained through action in this world of man." (Gita, IV. 12)

Here you have a wonderful manifestation of grit and power—what strength, what practicality, and what manhood! Horses huge as elephants are drawing carriages that are as big as houses. You may take this as a specimen of the gigantic proportions in other things also. Here is a manifestation of tremendous energy. . . . They look with veneration upon women, who play a most prominent part in their lives. Here this form of worship has attained its perfection—that is the long and the short of it. But to come to the point. Well, I am almost at my wit's end to see the women of this country! They take me to the shops and everywhere, as if I were a child. They do all sorts of work—I cannot do even a sixteenth part of what they do. They are like Lakshmi (the Goddess of Fortune) in beauty, and like Sarasvati (the Goddess of Learning) in virtues—they are the Divine Mother incarnate, and worshipping them, one verily attains perfection in everything. Great God! Are we to be counted among men? If I can raise a thousand such Madonnas, Incarnations of the Divine Mother, in our country, before I die, I shall die in peace. Then only will your countrymen become worthy of their name. . . .

I am really struck with wonder to see the women here. How gracious the Divine Mother is on them! Most wonderful women, these! They are about to corner the men, who have been nearly worsted in the competition. It is all through Thy grace, O Mother! . . . I shall not rest till I root out this distinction of sex. Is there any sex-distinction in the Atman (Self)? Out with the differentiation between man and woman—all is Atman! Give up the identification with the body, and stand up! Say, "Asti, Asti"—"Everything is!"—cherish positive thoughts. By dwelling too much upon "Nàṣti, Nasti"—"It is not! It is not!" (negativism), the whole country is going to ruin! "Soham, Soham, Shivoham"—"I am He! I am He! I am Shiva!" What a botheration! In every soul is infinite strength, and should you turn yourselves into cats and dogs by harbouring negative thoughts? Who dares to preach negativism? Whom do you call weak and powerless? "Shivoham, Shivoham"—"I am Shiva! I am Shiva!" I feel as if a thunderbolt strikes me on the head when I hear people dwell on negative thoughts. That sort of self-depreciating attitude is another name for disease—do you call that humility? It is vanity in disguise! न लिङ्गं धर्मकारणं, समता सर्वभूतेषु एतन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणं —"The external badge does not confer spirituality. It is same-sightedness to all beings which is the test of a liberated soul." अस्ति अस्ति सोऽहं सोऽहं, चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहं —"He frees himself from the meshes of this world as a lion from Knowledge and Bliss!" निर्गच्छति जगज्जालात् पिञ्जरादिव केशरी —'He frees himself from the meshes of this world as a lion from its cage!" नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः —"This Atman is not accessible to the weak." . . . Hurl yourselves on the world like an avalanche—let the world crack in twain under your weight! Hara! Hara! Mahâdeva! उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानम्—"One must save the self by one's own self—by personal progess."

. . . Will such a day come when this life will go for the sake of others' good? The world is not a child's play—and great men are those who build highways for others with their heart's blood. This has been taking place through eternity, that one builds a bridge by laying down his own body, and thousands of others cross the river through its help एवमस्तु, एवमस्तु, शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहं —"Be it so! Be it so! I am Shiva! I am Shiva!" . . .

It is welcome news that Madras is in a stir.

Were you not going to start a paper or something of that sort, what about that? We must mix with all, and alienate none. All the powers of good against all the powers of evil—this is what we want. Do not insist upon everybody's believing in our Guru. . . . You shall have to edit a magazine, half Bengali and half Hindi—and if possible, another in English. . . . It won't do to be roaming aimlessly. Wherever you go, you must start a permanent preaching centre. Then only will people begin to change. I am writing a book. As soon as it is finished, I run for home! . . . Always remember that Shri Ramakrishna came for the good of the world—not for name or fame. *Spread only what he came to teach. Never mind his name—it will spread of itself.* Directly you insist everybody's accepting your Guru, you will be creating a sect, and everything will fall to the ground—so beware! Have a kind word for all—it spoils work to show temper. Let people say whatever they like, stick to your own convictions, and rest assured, the world will be at your feet. They say, "Have faith in this fellow or that fellow", but I say, "Have faith in yourself first", that's the way. Have faith in yourself—all power is in you—be conscious and bring it out. Say, "I can do everything." "Even the poison of a snake is powerless if you can firmly deny it." Beware! No saying "nay", no negative thoughts! Say, "Yea, Yea", "Soham, Soham"—"I am He! I am He!"

किन्नाम रोदिषि सखे त्वयि सर्वशक्तिरामन्त्रयस्व भगवन् भगदं स्वरूपम् ।
त्रैलोक्यमेतदखिलं तव पादमूले आत्मैव हि प्रभवते न जडः कदाचित् ॥

—"What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature, O mighty one, and this whole universe will lie at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates, and not matter."

To work with undaunted energy! What fear! Who is powerful enough to thwart you! कुर्मस्तारकचर्वणं त्रिभुवनमुत्पाटयामो बलात्, किं भो न विजानास्यस्मान्, रामकृष्णदासा वयम्—"We shall crush the stars to atoms, and unhinge the universe. Don't you know who we are? We are the servants of Shri Ramakrishna." Fear! Whom to fear, forsooth!

क्षीणाः स्म दीनाः सकरुणा जल्पन्ति मूढा जना
नास्तिक्यन्त्विदन्तु अहह देहात्मवादातुराः ॥
प्राप्ताः स्म वीरा गतभया अभयं प्रतिष्ठां यदा
आस्तिक्यन्त्विदन्तु चिनुमः रामकृष्णदासा वयम् ।
-पीत्वा पीत्वा परमममृतं वीतसंसाररागाः
हित्वा हित्वा सकलकलहप्रापिणीं स्वार्थसिद्धिम् ।
ध्यात्वा ध्यात्वा गुरुवरपदं सर्वकल्याणरूपम्
नत्वा नत्वा सकलभुवनं पातुमामन्त्रयामः ॥
प्राप्तं यद्वै त्वनादिनिधनं वेदोदधिं मथित्वा
दत्तं यस्य प्रकरणे हरिहरब्रह्मादिदेवैर्बलम् ।
पूर्णं यत्तु प्राणसारैर्भौमनारायणानां
रामकृष्णस्तनुं धत्ते तत्पूर्णपात्रमिदं भोः ॥

—"It is those foolish people who identify themselves with their bodies, that piteously cry, We are weak, we are low. All this is atheism. Now that we have attained the state beyond fear, we shall have no more fear and become heroes. This indeed is theism which we, the servants of Shri Ramakrishna, will choose.

"Giving up the attachment for the world and drinking constantly the supreme nectar of immortality, for ever discarding that self-seeking spirit which is the mother of all dissension, and ever meditating on the blessed feet of our Guru which are the embodiment of all well-being, with repeated salutations we invite the whole world to participate in drinking the nectar.

"The nectar which has been obtained by churning the infinite ocean of the Vedas, into which Brahmâ, Vishnu, Shiva, and the other gods have poured their strength, which is charged with the life essence of the Avatâras—Gods Incarnate on earth—Shri Ramakrishna holds that nectar in his person, in its fullest measure!"

We must work among the English-educated young men. त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः—"Through renunciation alone some (rare ones) attained immortality" Renunciation!—Renunciation!—you must preach this above everything else. There will be no spiritual strength unless one renounces the world.

Why are Baburam (Premananda) and Yogen (Yogananda) suffering so much? It is owing to their negative, their self-abasing spirit. Tell them to brush aside their illness by mental strength, and in an hour it will disappear! I the Atman (Self) smitten with disease! Off with it! Tell them to meditate for an hour at a stretch, "I am the Atman, how can I be affected by disease!"—and everything will vanish. Think all of you that you are the infinitely powerful Atman, and see what strength comes out. Self-depreciating! What is it for! I am the child of the Infinite, the all-powerful Divine Mother. What can disease, or fear. or want, mean to me? Stamp out the negative spirit as if it were a pestilence, and it will conduce to your welfare in every way. No negative, all positive, affirmative. I *am*, God *is*, everything is in me. I *will* manifest health, purity, knowledge, whatever I want. Well, these foreign people could grasp my teachings, and you are suffering from illness owing to your negative spirit? Who says you are ill—what is disease to you? Brush it aside! वीर्यमसि वीर्यं, बलमसि बलं, ओजोऽसि ओजो, सहोऽसि सहो मयि धेहि

—"Thou art Energy, impart energy unto me. Thou art Strength, impart strength unto me. Thou art Spirituality, impart spirituality unto me. Thou art Fortitude, impart fortitude unto me!" The ceremony of steadying the seat (*âsana-pratisthâ*) that you perform every day when you sit down to worship the Lord— आत्मानमाच्छद्र भावयेत् "One must think of oneself as strong and invulnerable" and so forth —what does it all mean? Say, "Everything is in me, and I can manifest it at will." Repeat to yourself that such and such are Atman, that they are infinite, and how can they have any disease? Repeat this an hour or so, on a few successive days, and all disease and trouble will vanish into nought.

Yours ever,
VIVEKANANDA.

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541 DEARBORN AVENUE,
CHICAGO, *1894*.

DEAR ALASINGA,

Your letter just to hand. . . . I was mistaken in asking you to publish the scraps I sent you. It was one of my awful mistakes. It shows a moment's weakness. Money can be raised in this country by lecturing for two or three years. But I have tried a little, and although there is much public appreciation of my work, it is thoroughly uncongenial and demoralizing to me. . . .

I have read what you say about the Indian papers and their criticisms, which are natural. Jealousy is the central vice of every enslaved race. And it is jealousy and want of combination which cause and perpetuate slavery. You cannot feel the truth of this remark until you come out of India. The secret of Westerners' success is this power of combination, the basis of which is mutual trust and appreciation. The weaker and more cowardly a nation is, so much the more is this sin visible. . . . But, my son, you ought not to expect anything from a slavish race. The case is almost desperate no doubt, but let me put the case before you all. Can you put life into this dead mass—dead to almost all moral aspiration, dead to all future possibilities—and always ready to spring upon those that would try to do good to them? Can you take the position of a physician who tries to pour medicine down the throat of a kicking and refractory child? . . . An American or a European always supports his countrymen in a foreign country. . . . Let me remind you again, "Thou hast the right to work but not to the fruits thereof." Stand firm like a rock. Truth always triumphs. Let the children of Shri Ramakrishna be true to themselves and everything will be all right. We may not live to see the outcome, but as sure as we live, it will come sooner or later. What India wants is a new electric fire to stir up a fresh vigour in the national veins. This was ever, and always will be, slow work. Be content to work, and, above all, be true to yourself. Be pure, staunch, and sincere to the very backbone, and everything will be all right. If you have marked anything in the disciples of Shri Ramakrishna, it is this—they are sincere to the backbone. My task will be done, and I shall be quite content to die, if I can bring up and launch one hundred such men over India. He, the Lord, knows best. Let ignorant men talk nonsense. We neither seek aid nor avoid it—we are the servants of the Most High. The petty attempts of small men should be beneath our notice. Onward! Upon ages of struggle a character is built. Be not discouraged. One word of truth can never be lost; for ages it may be hidden under rubbish, but it will show itself sooner or later. Truth is indestructible, virtue is indestructible, purity is indestructible. Give me a genuine man; I do not want masses of converts. My son, hold fast! Do not care for anybody to help you. Is not the Lord infinitely greater than all human help? Be holy—trust in the Lord, depend on Him always, and you are on the right track; nothing can prevail against you. . . .

Let us pray, "Lead, Kindly Light"—a beam will come through the dark, and a hand will be stretched forth to lead us. I always pray for you; you must pray for me. Let each one of us pray day and night for the downtrodden millions in India who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft, and tyranny—

pray day and night for them. I care more to preach religion to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor. I see what they call the poor of this country, and how many there are who feel for them! What an immense difference in India! Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out? Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way. Him I call a Mahâtman (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Durâtman (wicked soul). Let us unite our wills in continued prayer for their good. We may die unknown, unpitied, unbewailed, without accomplishing anything—but not one thought will be lost. It will take effect sooner or later. My heart is too full to express my feeling; you know it, you can imagine it. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their ekpense, pays not the least heed to them! I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are now no better than hungry savages! We are poor, my brothers, we are nobodies, but such have been always the instruments of the Most High. The Lord bless you all.

With all love,
VIVEKANANDA.

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U.S.A.,
27th September, 1894

DEAR ALASINGA,

. . . One thing I find in the books of my speeches and sayings published in Calcutta. Some of them are printed in such a way as to savour of political views; whereas I am no politician or political agitator. I care only for the Spirit When that is right, everything will be righted by itself. . . So you must warn the Calcutta people that no political significance be ever attached falsely to any of my writings or sayings. What nonsense! . . . I heard that Rev. Kali Charan Banerji in a lecture to Christian missionaries said that I was a political delegate. If it was said publicly, then publicly ask the Babu for me to write to any of the Calcutta papers and prove it, or else take back his foolish assertion. This is their trick! I have said a few harsh words in honest criticism of Christian governments in general, but that does not mean that I care for, or have any connection with politics or that sort of thing. Those who think it very grand to print extracts from those lectures, and want to prove that I am a political preacher, to them I say, "Save me from my friends". . . .

. . . Tell my friends that a uniform silence is all my answer to my detractors. If I give them tit for tat, it would bring us down to a level with them. Tell them that truth will take care of itself, and that they are not to fight anybody for me. They have much to learn yet, and they are only children. They are still full of foolish golden dreams—mere boys!

. . . This nonsense of public life and newspaper blazoning has disgusted me thoroughly. I long to go back to the Himalayan quiet.

Ever yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

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U.S.A.,
29th September, 1894.

DEAR ALASINGA,

You all have done well, my brave unselfish children. I am so proud of you. . . . Hope and do not despair. After such a start, if you despair you are a fool. . . .

Our field is India, and the value of foreign appreciation is in rousing India up. That is all. . . . We must have a strong base from which to spread. . . . Do not for a moment quail. Everything will come all right. It is will that moves the world.

You need not be sorry, my son, on account of the young men becoming Christians. What else can they be under the existing social bondages, especially in Madras? Liberty is the first condition of growth. Your ancestors gave every liberty to the soul, and religion grew. They put the body under every bondage and society did not grow. The opposite is the case in the West—every liberty to society, none to religion. Now are falling off the shackles from the feet of Eastern society as from those of Western religion.

Each again will have its type; the religious or introspective in India, the scientific or out-seeing in the West. The West wants every bit of spirituality through social improvement. The East wants every bit of social power through spirituality. Thus it was that the modern reformers saw no way to reform but by first crushing out the religion of India. They tried and they failed. Why? Because few of them ever studied their own religion, and not *one* ever *underwent* the training necessary to understand the *Mother of all religions.* I claim that no destruction of religion is necessary to improve the Hindu society, and that this state of society exists not on account of religion, but because religion has not been applied to society as it should have been. This I am ready to prove from our old books, every word of it. This is what I teach, and this is what we must struggle all our lives to carry out. But it will take time, a long time to study. Have potience and work. उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानम्—Save yourself by yourself.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. The present Hindu society is organized only for spiritual men, and hopelessly crushes out everybody else. Why? Where shall they go who want to enjoy the world a little with its frivolities? Just as our religion takes in all, so should our society. This is to be worked out by first understanding the true principles of our religion, and then applying them to society. This is the slow but sure work to be done.

V

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U.S.A.,
September, 1894.

FRIENDS, FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN AND CO-RELIGIONISTS OF MADRAS,[1]

It is most gratifying to me to find that my insignificant service to the cause of our religion has been accepable to you, not because it is as a personal appreciation of me and my work in a foreign and distant land, but as a sure sign that though whirlwind after whirlwind of foreign invasion has passed over the devoted head of India, though centuries of neglect on our part and contempt on the part of our conquerors have visibly dimmed the glories of ancient Aryâvarta, though many a stately column on which it rested, many a beautiful arch, and many a marvellous corner have been washed away by the inundations that deluged the land for centuries—the centre is all sound, the key-stone is unimpaired. The spiritual foundation, upon which the marvellous monument of glory to God and charity to all beings has been reared, stands unshaken, strong as ever. Your generous appreciation of Him whose message to India and to the whole world, I, the most unworthy of His servants, had the privilege to bear, shows your innate spiritual instinct which saw in Him and His message the first murmurs of that tidal wave of spirituality—which is destined at no distant future to break upon India in all its irresistible powers, carrying away in its omnipotent flood all that is weak and defective, and raising the Hindu race to the platform it is destined to occupy in the providence of God, crowned with more glory than it ever had even in the past, the reward of centuries of silent suffering, and fulfilling its mission amongst the races of the world—the evolution of spiritual humanity.

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[1] When the success of the Swami in America became well known in India, several meetings were held and addresses of thanks and congratulations were forwarded to him. The first reply which he wrote was that to the Address of the Hindus of Madras.

The people of Northern India are especially grateful to you of the South, as the great source to which most of the impulses that are working in India today can be traced. The great Bhâshyakâras (commentators). epoch-making Âchâryas (Teachers), Shankara, Râmânuja, and Madhva were born in Southern India. Great Shankara to whom every Advaitavâdin in the world owes allegiance; great Ramanuja whose heavenly touch converted the downtrodden pariahs into Âlwârs; great Madhva whose leadership was recognised even by the followers of the only Northern Prophet—whose power has been felt all over the length and breadth of India—Shri Krishna Chaitanya. Even at the present day it is the South that carries the palm in the glories of Varanasi; your renunciation controls the sacred shrines on the farthest peaks of the Himalayas; and what wonder that with the blood of Prophets running in your veins, with your lives blessed by such Acharyas, you are the first and foremost to appreciate and hold on to the message of Bhagavân Shri Ramakrishna.

The South had been the repository of Vedic learning, and you will understand me when I state that, in spite of the reiterated assertions of aggressive ignorance, it is the Shruti still that is the backbone of all the different divisions of the Hindu religion.

However great may be the merits of the Samhitâ and the Brâhmana portions of the Vedas to the ethnologists or the philologists, however desirable may be the results that the अग्निमीले[1] or इषेत्वोर्जेंत्वा[2] or शन्नो देवीरमीष्टये[3] in conjunction with the different Vedis (altars) and sacrifices and libations

[1] ओं अग्निमीले पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम्। होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥
ऋग्वेदः १।१।१।

[2] ओं इषेत्वोर्जेत्वा वायवः स्थोपायवः स्थ देवो वः सविता प्रार्पयतु श्रेष्ठतमाय कर्मणे ॥
यजुर्वेदः १।१।१।

[3] ओं शन्नो देवीरमीष्टये आपो भवन्तु पीतये शंयोरभिस्रवन्तु नः ॥
अथर्ववेदः १।१।१ ।

produce—it was all in the way of Bhoga (enjoyment); and no one ever contended that it could produce Moksha (liberation). As such, the Jnâna-Kânda, the Âranyakas, the Shrutis *par excellence* which teach the way to spirituality, the Moksha-Mârga, have always ruled, and will always rule in India.

Lost in the mazes and divisions of the "Religion Eternal", by prepossession and prejudice unable to grasp the meaning of the only religion whose universal adaptation is the exact shadow of the अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयान्[1] God it preaches, groping in the dark, with a standard of spiritual truth borrowed second-hand from nations who never knew anything but rank materialism, the modern young Hindu struggles in vain to understand the religion of his forefathers, and gives up the quest altogether, and becomes a hopeless wreck of an agnostic, or else, unable to vegetate on account of the promptings of his innate religious nature, drinks carelessly of some of those different decoctions of Western materialism with an Eastern flavour, and thus fulfills the prophecy of the Shruti:

परियन्ति मूढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ।

—"Fools go staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the blind." They alone escape, whose spiritual nature has been touched and vivified by the life-giving touch of the "Sad Guru"[2].

Well has it been said by Bhagavan Bhashyakara:

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतत् देवानुग्रहहेतुकम् ।
मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः ॥

—"These three are difficult to obtain in this world, and depend on the mercy of the gods—the human birth, the desire for salvation, and the company of the great-souled ones" (*Vivekachudamani* of Shankaracharya).

Either in the sharp analysis of the Vaisheshikas, resulting in the wonderful theories about the Paramânus, Dvyanus, and Trasarenus[1] or the still more wonderful analysis displayed in the discussions of the Jâti, Dravya, Guna, Samavâya[2] and to the various categories of the Naiyâyikas, rising to the solemn march of the thought of the Sânkhyas, the fathers of the theories of evolution, ending with the ripe fruit, the result of all these researches, the Sutras of Vyâsa—the one background to all these different analyses and syntheses of the human mind, is still the Shrutis. Even in the philosophical writings of the Buddhists or Jains, the help of Shrutis is never rejected, and at least in some of the Buddhistic schools, and in the majority of the Jain writings, the authority of the Shrutis is fully admitted, excepting what they call the Himsaka Shrutis, which they hold to be interpolations of the Brâhmins. In recent times, such a view has been held by the late great Swami Dayânanda Sarasvati.

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[1] Smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest.
[2] Lit. the good teacher.

If one be asked to point out the system of thought towards which as a centre all the ancient and modern Indian thoughts have converged, if one wants to see the real backbone of Hinduism in all its various manifestations, the Sutras of Vyasa will unquestionably be pointed out as constituting all that.

Either one hears the Advaita-Keshari (lion of Vedanta) roaring in peals of thunder—the Asti, Bhâti, and Priya[3]—amidst the heart-stopping solemnities of the Himalayan forests, mixing with the solemn cadence of the river of heaven, or listens to the cooing of the Piyâ, Pitam in the beautiful bowers of the grove of Vrindâ, whether one mingles with the sedate meditations of the monasteries of Varanasi, or the ecstatic dances of the followers of the Prophet of Nadia; whether one sits at the feet of the teacher of the Vishistâdvaita system with its Vadakale, Tenkale,[4] and all the other subdivisions, or listens with reverence to the Acharyas of the Madhva school; whether one hears the martial "Wa Guruki Fateh"[5] of the secular Sikhs, or the sermons on the Grantha Sâhib of the Udâsis and Nirmalâs; whether he salutes the Sannyâsin disciples of Kabir with "Sat Sâhib" and listens with joy to the Sâkhis (Bhajans); whether he pores upon the wonderful lore of that reformer of Rajputana, Dâdu, or the works of his royal disciple, Sundaradâsa, down to the great Nishchaladâsa, the celebrated author of *Vichâra-Sâgara,* which book has more influence in India than any that has been written in any language within the last three centuries; if even one asks the Bhangi Mehtar of Northern India to sit down and give an account of the teachings of his Lâlguru—one will find that all these various teachers and schools have as their basis that system whose authority is the Shruti, Gitâ its divine commentary, the *Shâriraka-Sutras* its organized system, and all the different sects in India, from the Paramahamsa Parivrâjakâchâryas[1] to the poor despised Mehtar disciples of Lalguru, are different manifestations.

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[1] Atoms, Entities composed of two atoms, Entities composed of three atoms.

[2] Genus, Substance, Quality, Inhesion or inseparability.

[3] Exists (Sat), Shines (Chit), Is beloved—(Ananda)—the three indicatives of Brahman.

[4] The two divisions of the Ramanuja school.

[5] Victory to the Guru.

These three Prastânas,[2] then, in their different explanations as Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita, or Advaita, with a few minor recensions, form the "authorities" of the Hindu religion. The Purânas, the modern representations of the ancient Nârâsamsi (anecdote portions of the Vedas), supply the mythology and the Tantras, the modern representations of the Brâhmanas (ritual and explanatory portion of the Vedas), supply the ritual. Thus the three Prasthanas, as authorities, are common to all the sects; but as to the Puranas and Tantras, each sect has its own.

The Tantras, as we have said, represent the Vedic rituals in a modified form; and before any one jumps into the most absurd conclusions about them, I will advise him to read the Tantras in conjunction with the Brahmanas, especially the Adhvaryu portion. And most of the Mantras, used in the Tantras, will be found taken verbatim from their Brahmanas. As to their influence, apart from the Shrauta and Smârta rituals, all the forms of the rituals in vogue from the Himalayas to the Comorin have been taken from the Tantras, and they direct the worship of the Shâkta, or Shaiva, or Vaishnava, and all the others alike.

Of course, I do not pretend that all the Hindus are thoroughly acquainted with these sources of their religion. Many, especially in lower Bengal, have not heard of the names of these sects and these great systems; but consciously or unconsciously, it is the plan laid down in the three Prasthanas that they are all working out.

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[1] The highest order of Sannyasins.

[2]. "Courses", viz, Upanishads (Shruti), Gita, and the *Shariraka Sutras.*

Wherever, on the other hand, the Hindi language is spoken, even the lowest classes have more knowledge of the Vedantic religion than many of the highest in lower Bengal.

And why so?

Transported from the soil of Mithilâ to Navadvipa, nurtured and developed by the fostering genius of Shiromani, Gadâdhara, Jagadisha, and a host of other great names, an analysis of the laws of reasoning, in some points superior to every other system in the whole world, expressed in a wonderful and precise mosaic of language, stands the Nyâya of Bengal, respected and studied throughout the length and breadth of Hindusthân. But, alas, the Vedic study was sadly neglected, and until within the last few years, scarcely any one could be found in Bengal to teach the *Mahâbhâshya* of Patanjali. Once only a mighty genius rose above the never-ending Avachchhinnas and Avachchhedakas[1]—Bhagavân Shri Krishna Chaitanya. For once the religious lethargy of Bengal was shaken, and for a time it entered into a communion with the religious life of other parts of India.

It is curious to note that though Shri Chaitanya obtained his Sannyâsa from a Bhârati, and as such was a Bharati himself, it was through Mâdhavendra Puri that his religious genius was first awakened.

The Puris seem to have a peculiar mission in rousing the spirituality of Bengal. Bhagawan Shri Ramakrishna got his Sannyâsâshrama from Totâ Puri.

The commentary that Shri Chaitanya wrote on the *Vyâsa-Sutras* has either been lost or not found yet. His disciples joined themselves to the Mâdhvas of the South, and gradually the mantles of such giants as Rupa and Sanâtana and Jiva Goswâmi fell on the shoulders of Bâbâjis, and the great movement of Shri Chaitanya was decaying fast, till of late years there is a sign of revival. Hope that it will regain its lost splendour.

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[1] In Nyaya, 'Determined', and 'determining attribute'.

The influence of Shri Chaitanya is all over India. Wherever the Bhakti-Mârga (path of devotion) is known, there he is appreciated, studied, and worshipped. I have every reason to believe that the whole of the Vallabhâchârya recension is only a branch of the sect founded by Shri Chaitanya. But most of his so-called disciples in Bengal do not know how his power is still working all over India; and how can they? The disciples have become Gadiâns (Heads of monasteries), while he was preaching barefooted from door to door in India, begging Âchandâlas (all down to the lowest) to love God.

The curious and unorthodox custom of hereditary Gurus that prevails in Bengal, and for the most part in Bengal alone, is another cause of its being cut off from the religious life of the rest of India.

The greatest cause of all is that the life of Bengal never received an influx from that of the great brotherhood of Sannyasins, who are the representatives and repositories of the highest Indian spiritual culture, even at the present day.

Tyâga (renunciation) is never liked by the higher classes of Bengal. Their tendency is for Bhoga (enjoyment). How can they get a deep insight into spiritual things? त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः—"By renunciation alone immortality was reached." How can it be otherwise?

On the other hand, throughout the Hindi-speaking world, a succession of brilliant Tyâgi (world-renouncing) teachers of far-reaching influence has brought the doctrines of the Vedanta to every door. Especially the impetus given to Tyaga during the reign of Ranjit Singh of the Punjab has made the highest teachings of the Vedantic philosophy available for the very lowest of the low. With true pride, the Punjabi peasant girl says that even her spinning wheel repeats: "Soham", "Soham" And I have seen Mehtar Tyagis in the forest of Hrishikesh wearing the garb of the Sannyasin, studying the Vedanta. And many a proud high-class man would be glad to sit at their feet and learn. And why not? अन्त्यादपि परं धर्मं —"Supreme knowledge (can be learnt) even from the man of low birth."

Thus it is that the North-West and the Punjab have a religious education which is far ahead of that of Bengal, Bombay, or Madras. The ever-travelling Tyagis of the various orders, Dashanâmis or Vairâgis or Panthis bring religion to everybody's door, and the cost is only a bit of bread. And how noble and disinterested most of them are! There is one Sannyasin belonging to the Kachu Panthis, or independents (who do not identify themselves with any sect), who has been instrumental in the establishing of hundreds of schools and charitable asylums all over Rajputana. He has opened hospitals in forests and thrown iron bridges over the gorges in the Himalayas, and this man never touches a coin with his hands, has no earthly possession except a blanket, which has given him the nickname of the "Blanket Swami", and begs his bread from door to door. I have never known him taking a whole dinner from one house, lest it should be a tax on the householder. And he is only one amongst many. Do you think that so long as these Gods on earth live in India and protect the "Religion Eternal" with the impenetrable rampart of such godly characters, the old religion will die?

In this country,[1] the clergymen sometimes receive as high salaries as rupees thirty thousand, forty thousand, fifty thousand, even ninety thousand a year, for preaching two hours on Sunday only, and that only six months in a year. Look at the millions upon millions they spend for the support of their religion, and Young Bengal has been taught that these God-like, absolutely unselfish men like Kambli-Swami are idle vagabonds. मद्भक्तानाञ्च ये भक्तास्ते मे भक्ततमा मताः —"Those who are devoted to My worshippers are regarded as the best of devotees."

Take even an extreme case, that of an extremely ignorant Vairagi. Even he, when he goes into a village, tries his best to impart to the villagers whatever he knows, from Tulsidâs or *Chaitanya-Charitâmrita* or the Âlwârs in Southern India. Is that not doing some good? And all this for only a bit of bread and a rag of cloth. Before unmercifully criticizing them, think how much you do, my brother, for your poor fellow-countrymen, at whose expense you have got your education, and by grinding whose face you maintain your position and pay your teachers for teaching you that the Babajis are only vagabonds.

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[1] United States of America.

A few of your fellow-countrymen in Bengal have criticized what they call a new development of Hinduism. And well they may. For Hinduism is only just now penetrating into Bengal, where so long the whole idea of religion was a bundle of Deshâchâras (local customs) as to eating and drinking and marriage.

This short paper has not space for the discussion of such a big subject as to whether the view of Hinduism, which the disciples of Ramakrishna have been preaching all over India, was according to the "Sat Shâstras" or not. But I will give a few hints to our critics, which may help them in understanding our position better.

In the first place, I never contended that a correct idea of Hinduism can be gathered from the writings of Kâshidâsa or Krittivâsa, though their words are "Amrita Samân" (like nectar), and those that hear them are "Punyavâns" (virtuous). But we must go to Vedic and Dârshanika authorities, and to the great Acharyas and their disciples all over India.

If, brethren, you begin with the Sutras of Gautama, and read his theories about the Âptas (inspired) in the light of the commentaries of Vâtsyâyana, and go up to the Mimâmsakas with Shabara and other commentators, and find out what they say about the अलौकिकप्रत्यक्षम् (supersensuous realization), and who are Aptas, and whether every being can become an Apta, or not, and that the proof of the Vedas is in their being the words of such Aptas; if you have time to look into the introduction of Mahidhara to the Yajur-Veda, you will find a still more lucid discussion as to the Vedas being laws of the inner life of man, and as such they are eternal.

As to the eternity of creation—this doctrine is the corner-stone not only of the Hindu religion, but of the Buddhists and Jains also.

Now all the sects in India can be grouped roughly as following the Jnâna-Mârga or the Bhakti-Mârga. If you will kindly look into the Introduction of the *Shâriraka-Bhâshya* of Shri Shankarâchârya, you will find there the Nirapekshatâ (transcendence) of Jnana is thoroughly discussed and the conclusion is that realization of Brahman or the attainment of Moksha does not depend upon ceremonial, creed, caste, colour, or doctrine. It will come to any being who has the four Sâdhanâs, which are the most perfect moral culture.

As to the Bhaktas, even Bengali critics know very well that some of their authorities even declared that caste or nationality or sex, or, as to that, even the human birth, was never necessary to Moksha. Bhakti is the one and only thing necessary.

Both Jnana and Bhakti are everywhere preached to be unconditioned, and as such there is not one authority who lays down the conditions of caste or creed or nationality in attaining Moksha. See the discussion on the Sutra of Vyâsa—अन्तरा चापि तु तद्दृष्टेः [1] by Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva.

Go through the Upanishads, and even in the Samhitas, nowhere you will find the limited ideas of Moksha which every other religion has. As to toleration, it is everywhere, even in the Samhita of the Adhvaryu Veda, in the third or fourth verse of the fortieth chapter, if my memory does not fail; it begins with न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसंगिनाम् ।[2] This is running through everywhere. Was anybody persecuted in India for choosing his Ishta-Devatâ (Chosen Deity), or becoming an atheist or agnostic even, so long as he obeyed the social regulations? Society may punish anybody by its disapprobation for breaking any of its regulations, but no man, the lowest Patita (fallen man), is ever shut out from Moksha. You must not mix up the two together. As to that, in Malabar a Chandâla is not allowed to pass through the same street as a high-caste man, but let him become a Mohammedan or Christian, he will be immediately allowed to go anywhere; and this rule has prevailed in the dominion of a Hindu sovereign for centuries. It may be queer, but it shows the idea of toleration for other religions, even in the most untoward circumstances.

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[1] "But also (persons standing) between (are qualified for knowledge): for that is seen (in scripture)."—III. iv. 36. A person, even if he does not belong to an Ashrama (possessing not the means to entitle him to one or other of the Ashramas, stages of life) and thus stands between, as it were, is qualified for the knowledge of Brahman; for we meet scriptural passages declaring that persons of such a class possessed the knowledge of Brahman. Vide Chhând. Upa. IV. i; Bri. Upa. III. vi & viii.

[2] "(The wise one) should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant, attached to action." The line also occurs in the Gita.

The one idea the Hindu religions differ in from every other in the world, the one idea to express which the sages almost exhaust the vocabulary of the Sanskrit language, is that man must realize God, even in this life. And the Advaita texts very logically add, "To know God is to become God".

And here comes as a necessary consequence the broadest and most glorious idea of inspiration—not only as asserted and declared by the Rishis of the Vedas, not only by Vidura and Dharmavyâdha and a number of others, but even the other day Nischaladâsa, a Tyagi of Dâdu-panthi sect, boldly declared in his *Vichâra-Sâgara*: "He who has known Brahman has become Brahman. His words are Vedas, and they will dispel the darkness of ignorance, either expressed in Sanskrit or any popular dialect."

Thus to realize God, the Brahman, as the Dvaitins say, or to become Brahman, as the Advaitins say—is the aim and end of the whole teachings of the Vedas, and every other teaching, therein contained, represents a stage in the course of our progress thereto. And the great glory of Bhagavan Bhashyakara Shankaracharya is that it was his genius that gave the most wonderful expression to the ideas of Vyasa.

As Absolute, Brahman alone is true; as relative truth, all the different sects, standing upon different manifestations of the same Brahman, either in India or elsewhere, are true. Only some are higher than others. Suppose a man starts straight towards the sun. At every step of his journey, he will see newer and newer visions of the sun—the size, the view, and light will every moment be new, until he reaches the real sun. He saw the sun at first like a big ball, and then it began to increase in size. The sun was never small like the ball he saw; nor was it ever like all the succession of suns he saw in his journey. Still is it not true that our traveller always saw the sun, and nothing but the sun? Similarly, all these various sects are true—some nearer, some further off from the real Sun which is our एकमेवाद्वितीयम् —"One without a second".

And as the Vedas are the only scriptures which teach this real absolute God, of which all other ideas of God are but minimised and limited visions; as the सर्वलोकहितैषिणी[1]

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[1] i.e., the well-wisher to all the world.

Shruti takes the devotee gently by the hand, and leads him from one stage to another, through all the stages that are necessary for him to travel to reach the Absolute; and as all other religions represent one or other of these stages in an unprogressive and crystallized form, all the other religions of the world are included in the nameless, limitless, eternal Vedic religion.

Work hundreds of lives out, search every corner of your mind for ages—and still you will not find one noble religious idea that is not already imbedded in that infinite mine of spirituality.

As to the so-called Hindu idolatry—first go and learn the forms they are going through, and where is it that the worshippers are really worshipping, whether in the temple, in the image, or in the temple of their own bodies. First know for certain what they are doing—which more than ninety per cent of the revilers are thoroughly ignorant of—and then it will explain itself in the light of the Vedantic philosophy.

Still these Karmas are not compulsory. On the other hand, open your Manu and see where it orders every old man to embrace the fourth Ashrama,[1] and whether he embraces it or not, he must give up all Karma. It is reiterated everywhere that all these Karmas ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते— "finally end in Jnana".

As to the matter of that, a Hindu peasant has more religious education than many gentleman in other countries. A friend criticized the use of European terms of philosophy and religion in my addresses. I would have been very glad to use Sanskrit terms; it would have been much more easy, as being the only perfect vehicle of religious thought. But the friend forgot that I was addressing an audience of Western people: and although a certain Indian missionary declared that the Hindus had forgotten the meaning of their Sanskrit books, and that it was the missionaries who unearthed the meaning, I could not find one in that large concourse of missionaries who could understand a line in Sanskrit—and yet some of them read learned papers criticizing the Vedas and all the sacred sources of the Hindu religion!

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[1] Renunciation as the fourth stage of life after studentship, marriage, and retirement.

It is not true that I am against any religion. It is equally untrue that I am hostile to the Christian missionaries in India. But I protest against certain of their methods of raising money in America. What is meant by those pictures in the school-books for children where the Hindu mother is painted as throwing her children to the crocodiles in the Ganga? The mother is black, but the baby is painted white to arouse more sympathy and get more money. What is meant by those pictures which paint a man burning his wife at a stake with his own hands, so that she may become a ghost and torment the husband's enemy? What is meant by the pictures of huge cars crushing over human beings? The other day a book was published for children in this country, where one of these gentlemen tells a narrative of his visit to Calcutta. He says he saw a car running over fanatics in the streets of Calcutta. I have heard one of these gentlemen preach in Memphis that, in every village of India, there is a pond full of the bones of little babies.

What have the Hindus done to these disciples of Christ that every Christian child is taught to call the Hindus "vile" and "wretches", and the most horrible devils on earth? Part of the Sunday School education for children here consists in teaching them to hate everybody who is not a Christian, and the Hindus especially, so that, from their very childhood, they may subscribe their pennies to the missions. If not for truth's sake, for the sake of the morality of their own children, the Christian missionaries ought not to allow such things going on. Is it any wonder that such children grow up to be ruthless and cruel men and women? The greater a preacher can paint the tortures of eternal hell—the fire that is burning there, the brimstone—the higher is his position among the orthodox. A servant-girl in the employ of a friend of mine had to be sent to a lunatic asylum as a result of her attending what they call here the revivalist-preaching. The dose of hell-fire and brimstone was too much for her. Look again at the books published in Madras against the Hindu religion. If a Hindu writes one such line against the Christian religion, the missionaries will cry fire and vengeance.

My countrymen, I have been more than a year in this country. I have seen almost every corner of the society, and, after comparing notes, let me tell you that neither are we devils, as the missionaries tell the world we are, nor are they angels, as they claim to be. The less the missionaries talk of immorality, infanticide, and the evils of the Hindu marriage system, the better for them. There may be actual pictures of some countries before which all the imaginary missionary pictures of the Hindu society will fade away into light. But my mission in life is not to be a paid reviler. I will be the last man to claim perfection for the Hindu society. No man is more conscious of the defects that are therein, or the evils that have grown up under centuries of misfortunes. If, foreign friends, you come with genuine sympathy to help and not to destroy, godspeed to you. But if by abuses, incessantly hurled against the head of a prostrate race in season and out of season, you mean only the triumphant assertion of the moral superiority of your own nation, let me tell you plainly, if such a comparison be instituted with any amount of justice, the Hindu will be found head and shoulders above all other nations in the world as a moral race.

In India religion was never shackled. No man was ever challenged in the selection of his Ishta-Devatâ, or his sect, or his preceptor, and religion grew, as it grew nowhere else. On the other hand, a fixed point was necessary to allow this infinite variation to religion, and society was chosen as that point in India. As a result, society became rigid and almost immovable. For liberty is the only condition of growth.

On the other hand, in the West, the field of variation was society, and the constant point was religion. Conformity was the watchword, and even now is the watchword, of European religion, and each new departure had to gain the least advantage only by wading through a river of blood. The result is a splendid social organization, with a religion that never rose beyond the grossest materialistic conceptions.

Today the West is awakening to its wants; and the "true self of man and spirit" is the watchword of the advanced school of Western theologians. The student of Sanskrit philosophy knows where the wind is blowing from, but it matters not whence the power comes so long as it brings new life.

In India, new circumstances at the same time are persistently demanding a new adjustment of social organizations. For the last three-quarters of a century, India has been bubbling over with reform societies and reformers. But alas, every one of them has proved a failure. They did not know the secret. They had not learnt the great lesson to be learnt. In their haste, they laid all the evils in our society at the door of religion; and, like the man in the story, wanting to kill the mosquito that sat on a friend's forehead, they were trying to deal such heavy blows as would have killed man and mosquito together. But in this case, fortunately, they only dashed themselves against immovable rocks and were crushed out of existence in the shock of recoil. Glory unto those noble and unselfish souls who have struggled and failed in their misdirected attempts. Those galvanic shocks of reformatory zeal were necessary to rouse the sleeping leviathan. But they were entirely destructive, and not constructive, and as such they were mortal, and therefore dead.

Let us bless them and profit by their experience. They had not learnt the lesson that all is a growth from inside out, that all evolution is only a manifestation of a preceding involution. They did not know that the seed can only assimilate the surrounding elements, but grows a tree in its own nature. Until all the Hindu race becomes extinct, and a new race takes possession of the land, such a thing can never be—try East or West, India can never be Europe until she dies.

And will she die? This old Mother of all that is noble or moral or spiritual, the land which the sages trod, the land in which Godlike men still live and breathe? I will borrow the lantern of the Athenian sage and follow you, my brother, through the cities and villages, plains and forests, of this broad world—show me such men in other lands if you can. Truly have they said, the tree is known by its fruits. Go under every mango tree in India; pick up bushels of the worm-eaten, unripe, fallen ones from the ground, and write hundreds of the most learned volumes on each one of them—still you have not described a single mango. Pluck a luscious, full-grown, juicy one from the tree, and now you have known all that the mango is.

Similarly, these Man-Gods show what the Hindu religion is. They show the character, the power, and the possibilities of that racial tree which counts culture by centuries, and has borne the buffets of a thousand years of hurricane, and still stands with the unimpaired vigour of eternal youth.

Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct, all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies, and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be. The power of suffering is infinitely greater than the power of doing; the power of love is infinitely of greater potency than the power of hatred. Those that think that the present revival of Hinduism is only a manifestation of patriotic impulse are deluded.

First, let us study the quaint phenomenon.

Is it not curious that, whilst under the terrific onset of modern scientific research, all the old forts of Western dogmatic religions are crumbling into dust; whilst the sledge-hammer blows of modern science are pulverizing the porcelain mass of systems whose foundation is either in faith or in belief or in the majority of votes of church synods; whilst Western theology is at its wit's end to accommodate itself to the ever-rising tide of aggressive modern thought; whilst in all other sacred books the texts have been stretched to their utmost tension under the ever-increasing pressure of modern thought, and the majority of them are broken and have been stored away in lumber rooms; whilst the vast majority of thoughtful Western humanity have broken asunder all their ties with the church and are drifting about in a sea of unrest—the religions which have drunk the water of life at that fountain of light—the Vedas—Hinduism and Buddhism, alone are reviving?

The restless Western atheist or agnostic finds in the Gita or in the *Dhammapada* the only place where his soul can anchor.

The tables have been turned, and the Hindus, who saw through tears of despair his ancient homestead covered with incendiary fire, ignited by unfriendly hands, now sees, when the searchlight of modern thought has dispersed the smoke, that his home is the one that is standing in all its strength, and all the rest have either vanished or are building their houses anew after the Hindu plan. He has wiped away his tears and has found that the axe that tried to cut down to the roots the ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखं अश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् (Gita XV.1) has proved the merciful knife of the surgeon.

He has found that he has neither to torture texts nor commit any other form of intellectual dishonesty to save his religion. Nay, he may call all that is weak in his scriptures, weak, because they were meant to be so by the ancient sages, to help the weak, under the theory of अरुन्धतीदर्शनन्याय ।[1] Thanks to the ancient sages who have discovered such an all-pervading, ever-expanding system of religion that can accommodate all that has been discovered in the realm of matter and all that is to be known—he has begun to appreciate them anew, and discover anew, that those discoveries which have proved so disastrous to every limited little scheme of religion are but rediscoveries, in the plane of intellect and sense-consciousness, of truths which his ancestors discovered ages ago in the higher plane of intuition and superconsciousness.

He has not, therefore, to give up anything, nor go about seeking for anything anywhere, but it will be enough for him if he can utilize only a little from the infinite store he has inherited and apply it to his needs. And that he has begun to do and will do more and more. Is this not the real cause of this revival?

Young men of Bengal, to you I especially appeal.

Brethren, we know to our shame, that most of the real evils for which the foreign races abuse the Hindu nation are only owing to us. We have been the cause of bringing many undeserved calumnies on the head of the other races in India. But glory unto God, we have been fully awakened to it, and with His blessings, we will not only cleanse ourselves, but help the whole of India to attain the ideals preached in the religion eternal.

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[1] When a bride is brought to the house of her husband for the first time, he shows her a very tiny star called Arundhati. To do this, he has to direct her gaze the right way, which he does by asking her to look at something near and something big, in the direction of the star, e.g., a branch of a tree. Next he draws her attention to a large bright star observed beyond this branch and so on, till by several steps, he succeeds in leading her eyes to the right thing. This method of leading to a subtle object through easy and gradual steps is called Arundhati-Nyâya.

Let us wipe off first that mark which nature always puts on the forehead of a slave—the stain of jealousy. Be jealous of none. Be ready to lend a hand to every worker of good. Send a good thought for every being in the three worlds.

Let us take our stand on the one central truth in our religion—the common heritage of the Hindus, the Buddhists and Jains alike—the spirit of man—the Atman of man—the immortal, birthless, all-pervading, eternal soul of man whose glories the Vedas cannot themselves express, before whose majesty the universe with its galaxy upon galaxy of suns and stars and nebulae is as a drop. Every man or woman, nay, from the highest Devas to the worm that crawls under our feet, is such a spirit evoluted or involuted. The difference is not in kind, but in degree.

This infinite power of the spirit, brought to bear upon matter, evolves material development, made to act upon thought, evolves intellectuality, and made to act upon itself makes of man a God.

First, let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods. "Be and make." Let this be our motto. Say not man is a sinner. Tell him that he is a God. Even if there were a devil, it would be our duty to remember God always, and not the devil.

If the room is dark, the constant feeling and repeating of darkness will not take it away, but bring in the light. Let us know that all that is negative, all that is destructive, all that is mere criticism, is bound to pass away; it is the positive, the affirmative, the constructive that is immortal, that will remain for ever. Let us say, "We are and God is, and we are God", "Shivoham, Shivoham", and march on. Not matter but spirit. All that has name and form is subject to all that has none. This is the eternal truth the Shrutis preach. Bring in the light; the darkness will vanish of itself. Let the lion of Vedanta, roar; the foxes will fly to their holes. Throw the ideas broadcast, and let the result take care of itself. Let us put the chemicals together; the crystallization will take its own course. Bring forth the power of the spirit, and pour it over the length and breadth of India; and all that is necessary will come by itself.

Manifest the divinity within you, and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it. Remember the illustration of Indra and Virochana in the Vedas; both were taught their divinity, but the Asura, Virochana, took his body for his God. Indra, being a Deva, understood that the Atman was meant. You are the children of Indra. You are the descendants of the Devas. Matter can never be your God, body can never be your God.

India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the spirit; not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love, the garb of the Sannyâsin; not by the power of wealth, but by the power of the begging-bowl. Say not that you are weak. The spirit is omnipotent. Look at that handful of young men called into existence by the divine touch of Ramakrishna's feet. They have preached the message from Assam to Sind, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. They have crossed the Himalayas at a height of twenty thousand feet, over snow and ice on foot, and penetrated into the mysteries of Tibet. They have begged their bread, covered themselves with rags; they have been persecuted, followed by the police; kept in prison, and at last set free when the Government was convinced of their innocence.

They are now twenty. Make them two thousand tomorrow. Young men of Bengal, your country requires it. The world requires it. Call up the divinity within you, which will enable you to bear hunger and thirst, heat and cold. Sitting in luxurious homes, surrounded with all the comforts of life, and doling out a little amateur religion may be good for other lands, but India has a truer instinct. It intuitively detects the mask. You must give up. Be great. No great work can be done without sacrifice. The Purusha Himself sacrificed Himself to create this world. Lay down your comforts, your pleasures, your names, fame or position, nay even your lives, and make a bridge of human chains over which millions will cross this ocean of life. Bring all the forces of good together. Do not care under what banner you march. Do not care what be your colour—green, blue, or red—but mix all the colours up and produce that intense glow of white, the colour of love. Ours is to work. The results will take care of themselves. If any social institution stands in your way of becoming God, it will give way before the power of Spirit. I do not see into the future; nor do I care to see. But one vision I see clear as life before me, that the ancient Mother has awakened once more, sitting on her throne—rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction.

Yours ever in love and labour,
VIVEKANANDA.

63

WASHINGTON,
27th October, 1894.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,[1]

By this time you must have received my other letters. You must excuse me for certain harshness of tone sometimes, and you know full well how I love you. You have asked me often to send over to you all about my movements in this country and all my lecture reports. I am doing exactly here what I used to do in India. Always depending on the Lord and making no plans ahead. Moreover you must remember that I have to work incessantly in this country, so that I have no time to put together my thoughts in the form of a book, so much so that this constant rush has worn my nerves, and I am feeling it. . . . I cannot express my obligation to you, G. G., and all my friends in Madras, for the most unselfish and heroic work you did for me. But it was not at all meant to blazon me, but to make you conscious of your own strength. I am not an organizer, my nature tends towards scholarship and meditation. I think I have worked enough, now I want rest and to teach a little to those that have come to me from my Gurudeva (venerable Guru). You have known now what you can do, for it is really you, young men of Madras, that have done all; I am only the figurehead. I am a Tyâgi (detached) monk. I only want one thing. I do not believe in a God or religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth. However sublime be the theories, however well-spun may be the philosophy—I do not call it religion so long as it is confined to books and dogmas. The eye is in the forehead and not in the back. Move onward and carry into practice that which you are very proud to call your religion, and God bless you!

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[1] Alasinga Perumal.

Look not at me, look to yourselves. I am happy to have been the occasion of rousing an enthusiasm. Take advantage of it, float along with it and everything will come right. Love never fails, my son; today or tomorrow or ages after, truth will conquer. Love shall win the victory. Do you love your fellow men? Where should you go to seek for God—are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, gods? Why not worship them first? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganga? Believe in the omnipotent power of love. Who cares for these tinsel puffs of name? I never keep watch of what the newspapers are saying. Have you love?—You are omnipotent. Are you perfectly unselfish?—You are irresistible. It is character that pays everywhere. It is the Lord who protects His children in the depths of the sea. Your country requires heroes; be heroes! God bless you!

Everybody wants me to come over to India. They think we shall be able to do more if I come over. They are mistaken, my friend. The present enthusiasm is only a little patriotism, it means nothing. If it is true and genuine you will find in a short time hundreds of heroes coming forward and carrying on the work. Therefore know that you have really done all, and go on. Look not for me. Akshay Coomar Ghosh is in London. He sent a beautiful invitation from London to come to Miss Müller's. And I hope I am going in January or February next. Bhattacharya writes me to come over. Here is a grand field. What have I to do with this "ism" or that "ism"? I am the servant of the Lord, and where on earth is there a better field than here for propagating all high ideas? Here, where if one man is against me, a hundred hands are ready to help me; here, where man feels for man, weeps for his fellow men, and women are goddesses! Even idiots may stand up to hear themselves praised, and cowards assume the attitude of the brave, when everything is sure to turn out well, but the true hero works in silence. How many Buddhas die before one finds expression! My son, I believe in God and I believe in man. I believe in helping the miserable, I believe in going even to hell to save others. Talk of the Westerners? They have given me food, shelter, friendship, protection, even the most orthodox Christians! What do our people do when any of their priests go to India? You do not touch them even, they are MLECHCHHAS! No man, no nation, my son, can hate others and live. India's doom was sealed the very day they invented the word MLECHCHHA and stopped from communion with others. Take care how you foster that idea. It is good to talk glibly about the Vedanta, but how hard to carry out even its least precepts! . . .

Ever yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Take care of these two things—love of power and jealousy. Cultivate always "faith in yourself"

64

NEW YORK,
18th November, 1894.

DEAR SIR,[1]

I am in receipt of the resolutions that were passed at the recent Town Hall meeting in Calcutta, and the kind words my fellow-citizens sent over to me.

Accept, sir, my most heartfelt gratitude for your appreciation of my insignificant services.

I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others, and whenever such an attempt has been made under false ideas of greatness, policy, or holiness—the result has always been disastrous to the secluding one.

To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom—

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[1] Raja Pyari Mohan Mukherjee.

whose foundation was hatred of others—round the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindus from coming in contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations.

Whatever cloak ancient or modern sophistry may try to throw over it, the inevitable result—the vindication of the moral law, that none can hate others without degenerating himself —is that the race that was foremost amongst the ancient races is now a byword, and a scorn among nations. We are object-lessons of the violation of that law which our ancestors were the first to discover and discriminate.

Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races, and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life.

We must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth. And every Hindu that goes out to travel in foreign parts renders more benefit to his country than hundreds of men who are bundles of superstitions and selfishness and whose one aim in life seems to be like that of the dog in the manger. The wonderful structures of national life which the Western nations have raised, are supported by the strong pillars of character and until we can produce numbers of such, it is useless to fret and fume against this or that power.

Do any deserve liberty who are not ready to give it to others? Let us calmly and in a manly fashion go to work. instead of dissipating our energy in unnecessary frettings and fumings. I, for one, thoroughly believe that no power in the universe can withhold from any one anything he really deserves. The past was great no doubt, but I sincerely believe that the future will be more glorious still. May Shankara keep us steady in purity, patience and perseverance.

Yours faithfully,
VIVEKANANDA.

65

New York,
19th November, 1894.

My Brave Boys,[1]

Push on with the organization. At any cost, we must succeed, we must. No nay in this case. Nothing else is necessary but these—*Love, Sincerity*, and *Patience*. What is life but growth, i.e. expansion, i.e. *love*? Therefore all love is life, it is the only law of life, all selfishness is *death*, and this is true here or hereafter. Even if there is no hereafter, it is life to do good, it is death not to do good to others. Ninety per cent of human brutes you see are dead, are *ghosts*—for none lives, my boys, but he who loves. Feel, my children, feel; feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden, feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think you will go mad—then pour the soul out at the feet of the Lord and then will come power, help, and indomitable energy. Struggle, struggle was my motto for the last ten years. Struggle, still say I. When it was all dark I used to say, struggle, when light is breaking in, I still say, struggle. Be not afraid, my children. Look not up in that attitude of fear towards that infinite starry vault as if it would crush you. Wait! In a few hours more the whole of it will be under your feet. Wait, money does not pay, nor name; fame does not pay, nor learning. It is love that pays; it is character that cleaves its way through adamantine walls of difficulties.

Now the question before us is this. There cannot be any growth without liberty. Our ancestors freed religious thought, and we have a wonderful religion. But they put a heavy chain on the feet of society, and our society is, in a word, *horrid, diabolical*. In the West, society always had freedom, and look at them. On the other hand, look at their religion.

Liberty is the first condition of growth. Just as man must have liberty to think and speak, so he must have liberty in food, dress, and marriage and in every other thing, so long as he does not injure others.

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[1] Addressed through Alasinga Perumal to his Madras disciples.

We talk foolishly against material civilization. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishness for granted, in all India there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualization of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation? Why should any starve? How was it possible for the Hindus to have been conquered by the Mohammedans? It was ignorance of material civilization, gun powder, and cannon. Even the Mohammedans taught them to wear tailor-made clothes. Would the Hindus had learnt from the Mohammedans how to eat in a cleanly way without mixing their food with the dust of the streets! Material civilization, nay, even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! Pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed. No priestcraft, no social tyranny! More bread, more opportunity for everybody! Our young fools organize meetings to get more power from the English. They only laugh. None deserves liberty who is not ready to give liberty. Suppose the English give over to you all the power. Why, the powers that be, then, will hold the people down, and let them not have it. Slaves want power to make slaves.

Now, this is to be brought about slowly and by only insisting on our religion and giving liberty to society. Root up priestcraft from the old religion, and you get the best religion in the world. Do you understand me? Can you make a European society with India's religion? I believe it is possible and must be. The grand plan is to start a colony in Central India, where you can follow your own ideas independently, and then a little leaven will leaven all. . . . In the meanwhile form a Central Association, and go on branching off all over India. Start only on religious grounds now, and do not preach any violent social reform at present; only do not countenance foolish superstitions. Try to revive society on the old grounds of universal salvation and equality as laid down by the old Masters, such as Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and Chaitanya.

Have fire and spread all over. Work, work. Be the servant while leading, be unselfish, and *never listen to one friend in private accusing another*. Have infinite patience, and success is yours. . . . Now take care of this: Do not try to "boss" others, as the Yankees say. Because I always direct my letters to you, you need not try to show your consequence over my other friends. I know you never can be such a fool, but still I think it my duty to warn you. This is what kills all organizations. Work, work, for, to work only for the good of others is life.

I want that there should be no hypocrisy, no jesuitism, no roguery. I have depended always on the Lord, always on the Truth broad as the light of day. Let me not die with stains on my conscience for having played Jesuitism to get up name or fame, or even to do good. There should not be a breath of immorality, nor a stain of policy which is bad.

No shilly-shally, no *esoteric blackguardism,* no secret humbug, nothing should be done in a corner. No special favouritism of the Master, no Master at that even. Onward, my brave boys—money or no money—men or no men! Have you love? Have you God? Onward, and forward to the breach, you are irresistible.

How absurd! The Theosophical magazines saying that they prepared the way to my success! Indeed! Pure nonsense! Theosophists prepared the way!! . . .

Take care! Beware of everything that is untrue, stick to truth and we shall succeed, maybe slowly but surely. Work on as if I never existed. Work as if on each of you depended the whole work. Fifty centuries are looking on you, the future of India depends on you. Work on. I do not know when I shall be able to come. This is a great field for work. They can at best praise in India, but they will not give a cent for anything; and where shall they get it, *beggars* themselves? Then they have lost the faculty of doing public good for the last two thousand years or more. They are just learning the ideas of nation, public, etc. So I need not blame them. More afterwards.

With blessings, yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

66*

U.S.A.,
1894.

Dear Kali,

Thanks for all that I come to know from your letter. It had no news of the telegram in question having appeared in the *Tribune*. It is six months since I left Chicago, and I have not been yet free to return. So I could not keep myself well-posted. You have taken great pains indeed! And for this how can I thank you adequately? You have all evinced a wonderful capacity for work.[1] And how can Shri Ramakrishna's words prove false?—You have got wonderful spirit in you. About Shashi Sanyal, I have already written. Nothing remains undetected, through the grace of Shri Ramakrishna. But let him found a sect or whatever he will, what harm? शिवा वः सन्तु पन्थानः "May blessings attend your path!" Secondly, I could not catch the drift of your letter. I shall collect my own funds to build a monastery for ourselves, and if people criticize me for it, I see nothing in this to affect us either way. You have your minds pitched high and steady, it will do you no harm. May you have exceeding love for one another among yourselves, and it would be enough to have an attitude of indifference towards public criticisms. Kalikrishna Babu has deep love for the cause and is a great man. Please convey my special love to him. So long as there is no feeling of disunion amongst you, through the grace of the Lord, I assure you, there is no danger for you, रणे वने पर्वतमस्तके वा —"be it in battle, in the forest, or on the top of mountains." श्रेयांसि बहुविघ्नानि —"All noble undertakings are fraught with obstacles." It is quite in the nature of things. Keep up the deepest mental poise. Take not even the slightest notice of what puerile creatures may be saying against you. Indifference, indifference, indifference! I have already written to Shashi (Ramakrishnananda), in detail. Please do not send newspapers and tracts any more. "Take the husking hammer to heaven, and there it will do its husking", as the Bengali saying goes. The same trudging about here as it was in India, only with the carrying of others' loads added! How can I procure customers for people's books in this land? I am only one amongst the many here and nothing more. Whatever the papers and things of that sort in this country write about me, I make an offering of to the Fire-God. You also do the same. That is the proper course.

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[1] Refers to the successful public meeting convened at the Town Hall. Calcutta, under the chairmanship of Raja Pyari Mohan Mukherjee, for appreciating Swamiji and counteracting the missionary propaganda against him.

A bit of public demonstration was necessary for Guru Maharaj's (Shri Ramakrishna's) work. It is done, and so far so good. Now you must on no account pay any heed to what the rabble may be prattling about us. Whether I make my pile or do whatever else I am reported to, shall the opinions of the riff-raff stand in the way of His work? My dear brother, you are yet a boy, while I am growing grey. What regard I have for the pronouncements and opinions of such people, you should guess from this. So long as you gird up your loins and rally behind me, there is no fear even if the whole world combine against us. This much I understand that I shall have to take up a very lofty attitude. I should not, I think, write to anyone except to you. By the bye, where is Gunanidhi? Try to find him out and bring him to the Math with all kindness. He is a very sincere man and highly learned. You must try your best to secure two plots of land, let people say what they will. Let anyone write anything for or against me in the papers, you shouldn't take the slightest notice. And my dear brother, I beseech you repeatedly not to send me any more newspapers by the basketful. How can you talk of rest now? We shall have rest awhile only when we give up this body. Just do once get up the celebrations, brother, in that spirit, so that all the country around may burn with enthusiasm. Bravo! Capital indeed! The whole band of scoffers will be swept away by the tidal wave of love. You are elephants, forsooth, what do you fear from an ant-bite?

The address[1] you sent reached me long ago, and the reply to it has also been despatched to Pyari Babu.

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[1] Presented by the public in the Town Hall of Calcutta.

Bear in mind—the eyes are two in number and so the ears, but the mouth is but one. Indifference, indifference, indifference! न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति —"The doer of good deeds never comes to grief, my dear." Ah! To fear! and whom are we going to fear, brother? Here the missionaries and their ilk have hawled themselves into silence—and the whole world will but do likewise.

निन्दन्तु नीतिनिपुणा यदि वा स्तुवन्तु
लक्ष्मीः समाविशतु गच्छतु वा यथेष्टम् ।
अद्यैव वा मरणमस्तु शतान्तरे वा
न्याय्यात्पथः प्रविचलन्ति पदं न धीराः ॥

—"Whether people skilled in policy praise or blame, whether the Goddess of Fortune favours or goes her way, whether death befalls today or after hundreds of years—persons of steady mind never swerve from the path of righteousness" (Bhartrihari, *Nitishataka*).

You need not even mix with the humdrum people, nor beg of them either. The Lord is supplying everything and will do so in future. What fear, my brother? All great undertakings are achieved through mighty obstacles. हे वीर, कुरु पौरुषमात्मनः, उपेक्षितव्या जनाः सुकृपणाः कामकाञ्चनवशगाः—"You valiant one, put forth your manly efforts; wretched people under the grip of lust and gold deserve to be looked upon with indifference." Now I have got a firm footing in this country, and therefore need no assistance. But my one prayer to you all is that you should apply to the service of the Lord that active impulse of manliness which your eagerness to help me through brotherly love has brought out in you. Do not open out your mind, unless you feel it will be positively beneficial. Use agreeable and wholesome language towards even the greatest enemy. The desire for fame, for riches, for enjoyment is quite natural to every mortal, dear brother, and if that agrees well with serving both ways (i.e. serving both God and mammon), why, all men would exhibit great zeal! It is only the great saint who can work, making a mountain of an atom of virtue in others and cherishing no desire but that of the good of the world— परगुणपरमाणून् पर्वतीकृत्य, अपिच त्रिभुवनमुपकारश्रेणिभिः प्रीणयन्तः etc. (vide Bhartrihari, *Nitishataka*). Therefore let dullards whose intellect is steeped in ignorance and who look upon the non-Self as all in all, play out their boyish pranks. They will of themselves leave off the moment they find it too hot. Let them try to spit upon the moon—it will but recoil upon themselves. शुभं भवतु तेषाम् —Godspeed to them! If they have got anything substantial in them, who can bar their success? But if it be only empty swagger due to jealousy, then all will be in vain. Haramohan has sent rosaries. All right. But you should know that religion of the type that obtains in our country does not go here. You must suit it to the taste of the people. If you ask them to become Hindus, they will all give you a wide berth and hate you, as we do the Christian missionaries. They like some of the ideas of the Hindu scriptures—that is all. Nothing more than that, you should know. The men, most of them, do not trouble about religion and all that. The women are a little interested—that is all, but no large doses of it! A few thousands of people have faith in the Advaita doctrine. But they will give you the go-by if you talk obscure mannerisms about sacred writings, caste, or women. Everything proceeds slowly, by degrees. Patience, purity, perseverance.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

67*

U.S.A.,
1894

DEAR SHIVANANDA,

Your letter just reached me. Perhaps by this time you have received my other letters and learnt that it is not necessary to send anything to America any more. Too much of everything is bad. This newspaper booming has given me popularity no doubt, but its effect is more in India than here. Here, on the other hand, constant booming creates a distaste in the minds of the higher class people; so enough. Now try to organize yourselves in India on the lines of these meetings. You need not send anything more to this country. As to money, I have determined first to build some place for Mother,[1] for women require it first. . . . I can send nearly Rs. 7,000 for a place for Mother. If the place is first secured, then I do not care for anything else. I hope to be able to get Rs. 1,000 a year from this country even when I am gone. That sum I will make over to the support of the Women's place and then it will grow. I have written to you already to secure a place. . . .

I would have, before this, returned to India, but India has no money. Thousands honour Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, but nobody will give a cent—that is India. . . . In the meanwhile live in harmony at any price. The world cares little for principles. They care for persons. They will hear with patience the words of a man they like, however nonsense, and will not listen to anyone they do not like. Think of this and modify your conduct accordingly. Everything will come all right. Be the servant if you will rule. That is the real secret. Your love will tell even if your words be harsh. Instinctively men feel the love clothed in whatever language.[2]

My dear brother, that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was God incarnate, I have not the least doubt; but then you must let people find out for themselves what he used to teach—you cannot thrust these things upon them—this is my only objection.

Let people speak out their own opinions, why should we object? Without studying Ramakrishna Paramahamsa first, one can never understand the real import of the Vedas, the Vedanta, of the *Bhâgavata* and the other Purânas. His life is a searchlight of infinite power thrown upon the whole mass of Indian religious thought. He was the living commentary to the Vedas and to their aim. He had lived in one life the whole cycle of the national religious existence in India.

Whether Bhagavân Shri Krishna was born at all we are not sure; and Avataras like Buddha and Chaitanya are monotonous; Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is the latest and the most perfect—the concentrated embodiment of knowledge, love, renunciation, catholicity, and the desire to serve mankind. So where is anyone to compare with him? He must have been born in vain who cannot appreciate him. My supreme good fortune is that I am his servant through life after life. A single word of his is to me far weightier than the Vedas and the Vedanta. तस्य दासदासदासोऽहम् —Oh, I am the servant of the servants of his servants. But narrow bigotry militates against his principles, and this makes me cross. Rather let his name be drowned in oblivion, and his teachings bear fruit instead! Why, was he a slave to fame? Certain fishermen and illiterate people called Jesus Christ a God, but the literate people killed him. Buddha was honoured in his lifetime by a number of merchants and cowherds. But Ramakrishna has been worshipped in his lifetime—towards the end of this nineteenth century—by the demons and giants of the university as God incarnate. . . . Only a few things have been jotted down in the books about them (Krishna, Buddha, Christ, etc.). "One must be a wonderful housekeeper with whom we have never yet lived", so the Bengali proverb goes. But here is a man in whose company we have been day and night and yet consider him to be a far greater personality than any of them. Can you understand this phenomenon?

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[1] The Holy Mother, Shri Sarada Devi.

[2] These two paras. and the last half of para. 4 are in the original.

You have not yet understood the wonderful significance of Mother's life—none of you. But gradually you will know. Without Shakti (Power) there is no regeneration for the world. Why is it that our country is the weakest and the most backward of all countries?—Because Shakti is held in dishonour there. Mother has been born to revive that wonderful Shakti in India; and making her the nucleus, once more will Gârgis and Maitreyis be born into the world. Dear brother, you understand little now, but by degrees you will come to know it all. Hence it is her Math that I want first. . . . Without the grace of Shakti nothing is to be accomplished. What do I find in America and Europe?—the worship of Shakti, the worship of Power. Yet they worship Her ignorantly through sense-gratification. Imagine, then, what a lot of good they will achieve who will worship Her with all purity, in a Sâttvika spirit, looking upon Her as their mother! I am coming to understand things clearer every day, my insight is opening out more and more. Hence we must first build a Math for Mother. First Mother and Mother's daughters, then Father and Father's sons—can you understand this? . . . To me, Mother's grace is a hundred thousand times more valuable than Father's. Mother's grace, Mother's blessings are all paramount to me. . . . Please pardon me, I am a little bigoted here as regards Mother. If but Mother orders, her demons can work anything. Brother, before proceeding to America I wrote to Mother to bless me. Her blessing came, and at one bound I cleared the ocean. There, you see. In this terrible winter I am lecturing from place to place and fighting against odds, so that funds may be collected for Mother's Math.

Baburam's mother must have lost her sense owing to old age; and that is why she is about to worship Durga in the earthen image, ignoring the living one.[1] Brother, faith is very difficult to achieve. Brother, I shall show how to worship the living Durga and then only shall I be worthy of my name. I shall be relieved when you will have purchased a plot of land and established there the living Durga, the Mother. Till then I am not returning to my native land. As soon as you can do that, I shall heave a sigh of relief after sending the money. Do you accomplish this festival of Durga of mine by making all the necessary arrangements. Girish Ghosh is adoring the Mother splendidly; blessed is he, and blessed are his followers. Brother, often enough, when I am reminded of the Mother, I ejaculate, 'What after all is Rama?' Brother, that is where my fanaticism lies, I tell you. Of Ramakrishna, you may aver, my brother, that he was an Incarnation or whatever else you may like but fie on him who has no devotion for the Mother.

Niranjan has a militant disposition, but he has great devotion for Mother, and all his vagaries I can easily put up with. He is now doing the most marvellous work. I am keeping myself well-posted. And you too have done excellently in co-operating with the Madrasis. Dear brother, I expect much from you, you should organize all for conjoint work. As soon as you have secured the land for Mother, I go to India straight. It must be a big plot; let there be a mud-house to begin with, in due course I shall erect a decent building, don't be afraid.

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[1] Viz. Holy Mother Shri Sarada Devi.

The chief cause of malaria lies in water. Why do you not construct two or three filters? If you first boil the water and then filter it, it will be harmless. . . . Please buy two big Pasteur's bacteria-proof filters. Let the cooking be done in that water and use it for drinking purposes also, and you will never hear of malaria any more. . . . On and on, work, work, work, this is only the beginning.

Yours ever,
VIVEKANANDA.

68*

1894.

DEAR AND BELOVED,[1]

. . . Well, do you think there is any religion left in India! The paths of knowledge, devotion, and Yoga—all have gone, and now there remains only that of Don't touchism—"Don't touch me! Don't touch me!" The whole world is impure, and I alone am pure. Lucid Brahmajnâna! Bravo! Great God! Nowadays Brahman is neither in the recesses of the heart, nor in the highest heaven, nor in all beings—now He is in the cooking-pot. Formerly the characteristic of a noble-minded man was त्रिभुवनमुपकारश्रेणिभिः प्रीणयन्तः —"pleasing the whole universe by one's numerous acts of service," but now it is—I am pure and the whole world is impure —go and get money and set it at my feet. . . . Tell the sapient sage who writes to me to finish my preaching work here and return home, . . . that this country is more my home—what is there in Hindusthan? Who appreciates religion? Who appreciates learning?

To return home! Where is the home! I do not care for liberation, or for devotion, I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells. वसन्तवल्लोकहितं चरन्तः —"doing good to others (silently) like the spring"—this is my religion. I do not want to have any connection with lazy, hard-hearted, cruel and selfish men. He whose good fortune it is, may help in this great cause.

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[1] Swami Brahmananda.

. . . Please convey to all my love, I want the help of everyone. *Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning, it is character that can cleave through adamantine walls of difficulties.* Bear this in mind. . . .

Ever yours in love,
VIVEKANANDA.

69

U.S.A.,
30th November, 1894.

DEAR ALASINGA,

I am glad to learn that the phonograph and the letter have reached you safely. You need not send any more newspaper cuttings. I have been deluged with them. Enough of that. Now go to work for the organization. I have started one already in New York and the Vice-President will soon write to you. Keep correspondence with them. Soon I hope to get up a few in other places. We must organize our forces not to make a sect—not on religious matters, but on the secular business part of it. A stirring propaganda must be launched out. Put your heads together and organize.

What nonsense about the miracle of Ramakrishna! . . . Miracles I do not know nor understand. Had Ramakrishna nothing to do in the world but turning wine into the Gupta's medicine? Lord save me from such Calcutta people! What materials to work with! If they can write a real life of Shri Ramakrishna with the idea of showing what he came to do and teach, let them do it, otherwise let them not distort his life and sayings. These people want to know God who see in Shri Ramakrishna nothing but jugglery! . . . Now let Kidi translate his love, his knowledge, his teachings, his eclecticism, etc. This is the theme. The life of Shri Ramakrishna was an extraordinary searchlight under whose illumination one is able to really understand the whole scope of Hindu religion. He was the object-lesson of all the theoretical knowledge given in the Shâstras (scriptures). He showed by his life what the Rishis and Avatâras really wanted to teach. The books were theories, he was the realization. This man had in fifty-one years lived the five thousand years of national spiritual life, and so raised himself to be an object-lesson for future generations. The Vedas can only be explained and the Shastras reconciled by his theory of Avasthâ or stages—that we must not only tolerate others, but positively embrace them, and that truth is the basis of all religions. Now on these lines a most impressive and beautiful life can be written. Well, everything in good time. Avoid all irregular indecent expressions about sex etc. . . ., because other nations think it the height of indecency to mention such things, and his life in English is going to be read by the whole world. I read a Bengali life sent over. It is full of such words. . . . So take care, carefully avoid such words and expressions. The Calcutta friends have not a cent worth of ability; but they have their assertions of individuality. They are too high to listen to advice. I do not know what to do with these wonderful gentlemen. I have not got much hope in that quarter. *His will be done.* I am simply ashamed of the Bengali book. The writer perhaps thought he was a frank recorder of truth and keeping the very language of Paramahamsa. But he does not remember that Ramakrishna would never use that language before ladies. And this man expects his work to be read by men and women alike! Lord, save me from fools! They, again, have their own freaks; they all knew him! *Bosh and rot.* . . . Beggars taking upon themselves the air of kings! Fools thinking they are all wise! Puny slaves thinking that they are masters! That is their condition. I do not know what to do. Lord save me. I have all hope in Madras. Push on with your work; do not be governed by the Calcutta people. Keep them in good humour in the hope that some one of them may turn good. But push on with your work independently. "Many come to sit at dinner when it is cooked." Take care and work on.

Yours ever with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

70

U.S.A.,
30th November, 1894.

DEAR KIDI,

. . . As to the wonderful stories published about Shri Ramakrishna, I advise you to keep clear of them and the fools who write them. They are true, but the fools will make a mess of the whole thing, I am sure. He had a whole world of knowledge to teach, why insist upon unnecessary things as miracles really are! They do not prove anything. Matter does not prove Spirit. What connection is there between the existence of God, soul, or immortality, and the working of miracles? . . . Preach Shri Ramakrishna. Pass the Cup that has satisfied your thirst. . . . Preach Bhakti. Do not disturb your head with metaphysical nonsense, and do not disturb others by your bigotry. . . .

Yours ever with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

71

U.S.A.,
30th November, 1894.

DEAR AND BELOVED,[1]

Your beautiful letter just came to hand. I am so glad that you have come to know Shri Ramakrishna. I am very glad at the strength of your Vairâgya (renunciation). It is the one primary necessity in reaching God. I had always great hopes for Madras, and still I have the firm belief that from Madras will come the spiritual wave that will deluge India. I can only say Godspeed to your good intentions; but here, my son, are the difficulties. In the first place, no man ought to take a hasty step. In the second place, you must have some respect for the feelings of your mother and wife. True, you may say that we, the disciples of Ramakrishna, had not always shown great deference to the opinions of our parents. I know, and know for sure, that great things are done only by great sacrifices. I know for certain that India requires the sacrifice of her highest and best, and I sincerely hope that it will be your good fortune to be one of them.

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[1] Dr. Nanjunda Rao.

Throughout the history of the world you find great men make great sacrifices and the mass of mankind enjoy the benefit. If you want to give up everything for your own salvation, it is nothing. Do you want to forgo even your own salvation for the good of the world?—You are God. Think of that. My advice to you is to live the life of a Brahmachârin, i.e. giving up all sexual enjoyments for a certain time live in the house of your father; this is the "Kutichaka" stage. Try to bring your wife to consent to your great sacrifice for the good of the world. And if you have burning faith and all conquering love and almighty purity, I do not doubt that you will shortly succeed. Give yourself body and soul to the work of spreading the teachings of Shri Ramakrishna, for work (Karma) is the first stage. Study Sanskrit diligently as well as practise devotion. For you are to be a great teacher of mankind, and my Guru Maharaj used to say, "A penknife is sufficient to commit suicide with, but to kill others one requires guns and swords." And in the fullness of time it will be given unto you when to go forth out of the world and preach His sacred name. Your determination is holy and good. Godspeed to you, but do not take any hasty step. First purify yourself by work and devotion India has suffered long, the Religion Eternal has suffered long But the Lord is merciful. Once more He has come to help His children, once more the opportunity is given to rise to fallen India. India can only rise by sitting at the feet of Shri Ramakrishna. His life and his teachings are to be spread far and wide, are to be made to penetrate every pore of Hindu society. Who will do it? Who are to take up the flag of Ramakrishna and march for the salvation of the world? Who are to stem the tide of degeneration at the sacrifice of name and fame, wealth and enjoyment—nay of every hope of this or other worlds? A few young men have jumped in the breach have sacrificed themselves. They are a few; we want a few thousands of such as they, and *they will come.* I am glad that our Lord has put it in your mind to be one of them. Glory unto him on whom falls the Lord's choice. Your determination is good, your hopes are high, your aim is the noblest in the world—to bring millions sunk in darkness to the light of the Lord.

But, my son, here are the drawbacks. Nothing shall be done in haste. Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials to success and, above all, *love.* All time is yours, there is no indecent haste. Everything will come right if you are pure and sincere. We want hundreds like you bursting upon society and bringing new life and vigour of the Spirit wherever they go Godspeed to you.

Yours, with all blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

72

U.S.A.,
1894.

DEAR DHARMAPALA,

I have forgotten your address in Calcutta; so I direct this to the Math. I heard about your speeches in Calcutta and how wonderful was the effect produced by them. A certain retired missionary here wrote me a letter addressing me as brother and then hastily went to publish my short answer and make a show. But you know what people here think of such gentlemen. Moreover, the same missionary went privately to some of my friends to ask them not to befriend me. Of course he met with universal contempt. I am quite astonished at this man's behaviour—a preacher of religion to take to such underhand dealings! Unfortunately too much of that in every country and in every religion. Last winter I travelled a good deal in this country although the weather was very severe. I thought it would be dreadful, but I did not find it so after all. You remember Col. Neggenson, President of the Free Religious Society. He makes very kind enquiries about you. I met Dr. Carpenter of Oxford (England) the other day. He delivered an address on the ethics of Buddhism at Plymouth. It was very sympathic and scholarly. He made enquiries about you and your paper. Hope, your noble work will succeed. You are a worthy servant of Him who came, Bahujana Hitâya Bahujana Sukhâya (for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many).

. . . The Christianity that is preached in India is quite different from what one sees here; you will be astonished to hear, Dharmapala, that I have friends in this country amongst the clergy of the Episcopal and even Presbyterian churches, who are as broad, as liberal, and as sincere as you are in your own religion. The real spiritual man is broad everywhere. His love forces him to be so. Those to whom religion is a trade are forced to become narrow and mischievous by their introduction into religion of the competitive, fighting, and selfish methods of the world.

Yours ever in brotherly love,
VIVEKANANDA.

73

U.S.A.,
1894.

DEAR ALASINGA,

Listen to an old story. A lazy tramp sauntering along the road saw an old man sitting at the door of his house and stopped to enquire of him the whereabouts of a certain place. "How far is such and such a village?" he asked. The old man remained silent. The man repeated his query several times Still there was no answer. Disgusted at this, the traveller turned to go away. The old man then stood up and said, "The village of—is only a mile from here." "What!" said the tramp, "Why did you not speak when I asked you before?" "Because then". said the old man, "you seemed so halting and careless about proceeding, but now you are starting off in good earnest, and you have a right to an answer."

Will you remember this story, my son? Go to work, the rest will come: "Whosoever not trusting in anything else but Me, rests on Me, I supply him with everything he needs' (Gitâ, IX. 22). This is no dream.

. . . The work should be in the line of preaching and serving at the present time. Choose a place of meeting where you can assemble every week holding a service and reading the Upanishads with the commentaries, and so slowly go on learning and working. Everything will come to you if you put your shoulders to the wheel. . . .

Now, go to work! G. G.'s nature is of the emotional type, you have a level head; so work together; plunge in; this is only the beginning. Every nation must save itself; we must not depend upon funds from America for the revival of Hinduism, for that is a delusion. To have a centre is a great thing; try to secure such a place in a large town like Madras, and go on radiating a living force in all directions. Begin slowly. Start with a few lay missionaries; gradually others will come who will devote their whole lives to the work. Do not try to be a ruler. He is the best ruler who can serve well. Be true unto death. The work we want. We do not seek wealth, name, or fame. . . . Be brave. . . . Endeavour to interest the people of Madras in collecting funds for the purpose, and then make a beginning. . . . Be perfectly unselfish and you will be sure to succeed. . . . Without losing the independence in work, show all regards to your superiors. Work in harmony. . . . My children must be ready to jump into fire, if needed, to accomplish their work. Now work, work, work! We will stop and compare notes later on. Have patience, perseverance, and purity.

I am writing no book on Hinduism just now. I am simply jotting down my thoughts. I do not know if I shall publish them. What is in books? The world is too full of foolish things already. If you could start a magazine on Vedantic lines, it would further our object. Be positive; do not criticize others. Give your message, teach what you have to teach, and there stop. The Lord knows the rest. . . .

Do not send me any more newspapers, as I do not notice the missionary criticisms on myself; and here the public estimation of me is better for that reason.

. . . If you are really my children, you will fear nothing, stop at nothing. You will be like lions. We must rouse

India and the whole world. No cowardice. I will take no nay. Do you understand? Be true unto death! . . . The secret of this is Guru-Bhakti—faith in the Guru unto death! Have you that? I believe with all my heart that you have, and you know that I have confidence in you—so go to work. You must succeed. My prayers and benedictions follow every step you take. Work in harmony. Be patient with everybody. Every one has my love. I am watching you. Onward! Onward! This is just the beginning. My little work here makes a big echo in India, do you know? So I shall not return there in a hurry. My intention is to do something permanent here, and with that object I am working day by day. I am every day gaining the confidence of the American people. . . . Expand your hearts and hopes, as wide as the world. Study Sanskrit, especially the three Bhâshyas (commentaries) on the Vedanta. Be ready, for I have many plans for the future. Try to be a magnetic speaker. Electrify the people. Everything will come to you if you have faith. So tell Kidi, in fact, tell all my children there. In time they will do great things at which the world will wonder. Take heart and work. Show me something you have done. Show me a temple, a press, a paper, a home for use. Where shall I come to if you cannot make a home for me in Madras? Electrify people. Raise funds and preach. Be true to your mission. Thus far you promise well, so go on and do better and better still.

. . . Do not fight with people; do not antagonise anyone. Why should we mind if Jack and John become Christians? Let them follow whatever religion suits them. Why should you mix in controversies? Bear with the various opinions of everybody. Patience, purity, and perseverance will prevail.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

but Me, rests on Me, I supply him with everything he needs' (Gitâ, IX. 22). This is no dream.

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. . . If you are really my children, you will fear nothing, stop at nothing. You will be like lions. We must rouse

India and the whole world. No cowardice. I will take no nay. Do you understand? Be true unto death! . . . The secret of this is Guru-Bhakti—faith in the Guru unto death! Have you that? I believe with all my heart that you have, and you know that I have confidence in you—so go to work. You must succeed. My prayers and benedictions follow every step you take. Work in harmony. Be patient with everybody. Every one has my love. I am watching you. Onward! Onward! This is just the beginning. My little work here makes a big echo in India, do you know? So I shall not return there in a hurry. My intention is to do something permanent here, and with that object I am working day by day. I am every day gaining the confidence of the American people. . . . Expand your hearts and hopes, as wide as the world. Study Sanskrit, especially the three Bhâshyas (commentaries) on the Vedanta. Be ready, for I have many plans for the future. Try to be a magnetic speaker. Electrify the people. Everything will come to you if you have faith. So tell Kidi, in fact, tell all my children there. In time they will do great things at which the world will wonder. Take heart and work. Show me something you have done. Show me a temple, a press, a paper, a home for use. Where shall I come to if you cannot make a home for me in Madras? Electrify people. Raise funds and preach. Be true to your mission. Thus far you promise well, so go on and do better and better still.

. . . Do not fight with people; do not antagonise anyone. Why should we mind if Jack and John become Christians? Let them follow whatever religion suits them. Why should you mix in controversies? Bear with the various opinions of everybody. Patience, purity, and perseverance will prevail.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

74

541 Dearborn Avenue
Chicago,
3rd January, 1895.

Dear Sir,[1]

It is with a heart full of love, gratitude, and trust, that I take up my pen to write to you. Let me tell you first, that you are one of the few men that I have met in my life who are thorough in their convictions. You have a whole-souled possession of a wonderful combination of feeling and knowledge, and withal a practical ability to bring ideas into realized forms. Above all you are sincere, and as such I confide to you some of my ideas.

The work has begun well in India, and it should not only be kept up but pushed on with the greatest vigour. Now or never is the time. After taking a far and wide view of things, my mind has now been concentrated on the following plan. First, it would be well to open a Theological College in Madras and then gradually extend its scope; to give a thorough education to young men in the Vedas and the different Bhâshyas and philosophies including a knowledge of the other religions of the world. At the same time a paper in English and the vernacular should be started as an organ of the College.

This is the first step to be taken, and huge things grow out of small undertakings. . . . Madras just now is following the golden mean by appreciating both the ancient and modern phases of life.

I fully agree with the educated classes in India, that a thorough overhauling of society is necessary. But how to do it? The destructive plans of reformers have failed. My plan is this: We have not done *badly* in the past; certainly not. Our society is not *bad* but *good*, only I want it to be better still. Not from error to truth, nor from bad to good, but from truth to higher truth, from good to better, best. I tell my countrymen that so far they have done well—now is the time to do better. Now take the case of caste, in Sanskrit, Jâti, i.e. species.

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[1] Justice Sir Subrahmanya Iyer.

Now this is the first idea of creation. Variation (Vichitratâ), that is to say Jati, means creation. "I am one, I become many" (various Vedas). Unity is before creation, diversity is creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is vigorous and active it must throw out varieties. When it ceases or is stopped from breeding varieties, it dies. Now the original idea of Jati was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his Prakriti, his Jati, his caste, and so it remained for thousands of years. Not even in the latest books is inter-dining prohibited; nor in any of the older books is inter-marriage forbidden. Then what was the cause of India's downfall?—the giving up of this idea of caste. As Gita says, with the extinction of caste the world will be destroyed. Now does it seem true that with the stoppage of these variations the world will be destroyed? The present caste is not the real Jati, but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of Jati, i.e. caste or variation. Any crystallized custom or privilege or hereditary class in any shape really prevents caste (Jati), from having its full sway; and whenever any nation ceases to produce this immense variety, it must die. Therefore what I have to tell you, my countrymen, is this: that India fell because you prevented and abolished caste. Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not-caste. Let Jati have its sway; break down every barrier in the way of caste, and we shall rise. Now look at Europe. When it succeeded in giving free scope to caste and took away most of the barriers that stood in the way of individuals—each developing his caste—Europe rose. In America there is the best scope for caste (real Jati) to develop, and so the people are great. Every Hindu knows that astrologers try to fix the caste of every boy or girl as soon as he or she is born. That is the real caste, the individuality, and Jyotisha recognized that. And we can only rise by giving it full sway again. This variety does not mean inequality nor any special privilege.

This is my method—to show the Hindus that they have to give up nothing but only to move in the line laid down by the sages and shake off their inertia, the result of centuries of servitude. Of course we had to stop advancing during the Mohammedan tyranny, for then it was not a question of progress but of life and death. Now that that pressure has gone, we must move forward, not on the lines of destruction directed by renegades and missionaries, but along our own line—our own road. Everything is hideous because the building is unfinished. We had to stop building during centuries of oppression. Now, finish the building and everything will look beautiful in its own place. This is all my plan. I am thoroughly convinced of this. Each nation has a main current in life; in India it is religion. Make it strong and the waters on either side must move along with it. This is one phase of my line of thought. In time, I hope to bring them all out, but at present I find I have a mission in this country also. Moreover, I expect help in this country and from here alone. But up to date I could not do anything except spreading my ideas. Now I want that a similar attempt be made in India. . . . I do not know when I shall go over to India. I obey the leading of the Lord. I am in His hands.

"In this world in search of wealth, Thou art O Lord, the greatest jewel I have found. I sacrifice myself unto Thee."

"In search of some one to love, Thou art the One Beloved I have found. I sacrifice myself unto Thee" (Yajur-Veda Samhitâ).

May the Lord bless you for ever and ever!

Yours ever gratefully,
VIVEKANANDA.

75

CHICAGO,
11th January, 1895.

DEAR G. G.,

Your letter just to hand. . . . The Parliament of Religions was organized with the intention of proving the superiority of the Christian religion over other forms of faith, but the philosophic religion of Hinduism was able to maintain its position notwithstanding. Dr. Barrows and the men of that ilk are very orthodox, and I do not look to them for help. . . .

The Lord has sent me many friends in this country, and they are always on the increase. The Lord bless those who have tried to injure me. . . . I have been running all the time between Boston and New York, two great centres of this country, of which Boston may be called the brain and New York, the purse. In both, my success is more than ordinary. I am indifferent to the newspaper reports, and you must not expect me to send any of them to you. A little boom was necessary to begin work. We have had more than enough of that.

I have written to Mani Iyer, and I have given you my directions already. *Now show me what you can do.* No foolish talk now, but actual work; the Hindus must back their talk with real work; if they cannot, they do not deserve anything; that is all. America is not going to give you money for your fads. And why should they? As for me, I want to teach the truth; I do not care whether here or elsewhere.

In future do not pay any heed to what people say either for or against you or me. Work on, be lions; and the Lord will bless you. I shall work incessantly until I die, and even after death I shall work for the good of the world. Truth is infinitely more weighty than untruth; so is goodness. If you possess these, they will make their way by sheer gravity.

I have no connection with the Theosophists. And Judge[1] will help me—pooh! . . . Thousands of the best men *do* care for me; you know this, and have faith in the Lord. I am slowly exercising an influence in this land greater than all the newspaper blazoning of me can do. The orthodox feel it, but they cannot help it. It is the force of character, of purity, and of truth—of personality. So long as I have these things you can feel easy; no one will be able to injure a hair of my head. If they try, they will fail, saith the Lord. . . . Enough of books and theories. It is the *life* that is the highest and the only way to stir the hearts of people; it carries the personal magnetism. . . . The Lord is giving me a deeper and deeper insight every day. Work, work, work. . . . Truce to foolish talk; talk of the Lord. Life is too short to be spent in talking about frauds and cranks.

You must always remember that every nation must save itself; so must every man; do not look to others for help. Through hard work here, I shall be able now and then to send you a little money for your work; but that is all. If you have to look forward to that, better stop work. Know also that this is a grand field for my ideas, and that I do not care whether they are Hindus or Mohammedans or Christians, but those that love the Lord will always command my service.

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[1] Mr. Judge, a Theosophist leader.

. . . I like to work on calmly and silently, and the Lord is always with me. Follow me, if you will, by being intensely sincere, perfectly unselfish, and, above all, by being perfectly pure. My blessings go with you. In this short life there is no time for the exchange of compliments. We can compare notes and compliment each other to our hearts' content after the battle is finished. Now, do not talk; work, work, work; I do not see anything permanent you have done in India—I do not see any centre you have made—I do not see any temple or hall you have erected—I do not see anybody joining hands with you. There is too much talk, talk, talk! We are great, we are great! Nonsense! We are imbeciles; that is what we are! This hankering after name and fame and all other humbugs—what are they to me? What do I care about them? I should like to see hundreds coming to the Lord! Where are they? I want them, I want to see them. You must seek them out. You only give me name and fame. Have done with name and fame; to work, my brave men, to work! You have not caught my fire yet—you do not understand me! You run in the old ruts of sloth and enjoyments. Down with all sloth, down with all enjoyments here or hereafter. Plunge into the fire and bring the people towards the Lord.

That you may catch my fire, that you may be intensely sincere, that you may die the heroes' death on the field of battle—is the constant prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Tell Alasinga, Kidi, Dr. Balaji, and all the others not to pin their faith on what Tom, Dick, and Harry say for or against us, but to concentrate all their energy on work.

76

U.S.A.,
12th January, 1895.

DEAR ALASINGA,

I am sorry you still continue to send me pamphlets and newspapers, which I have written you several times not to do. I have no time to peruse them and take notice of them. Please send them *no more.* I do not care a fig for what the missionaries or the Theosophists say about me. Let them do as they please. The very taking notice of them will be to give them importance. Besides, you know, the missionaries only abuse and never argue.

Now know once and for all that I do not care for name or fame, or any humbug of that type. I want to preach my ideas for the good of the world. You have done a great work; but so far as it goes, it has only given *me* name and fame. My life is more precious than spending it in getting the admiration of the world. I have no time for such foolery. What work have you done in the way of advancing the ideas and organizing in India? *None, none, none!*

An organization that will teach the Hindus mutual help and appreciation is absolutely necessary. Five thousand people attended that meeting that was held in Calcutta, and hundreds did the same in other places, to express an appreciation of my work here—well and good! But if you asked them each to give an anna, would they do it? The whole national character is one of childish dependence. They are all ready to enjoy food if it is brought to their mouth, and even some want it pushed down. . . . You do not deserve to live if you cannot help yourselves. . . .

I have given up at present my plan for the education of the masses. It will come by degrees. What I now want is a band of fiery missionaries. We must have a *College* in Madras to teach comparative religions, Sanskrit, the different schools of Vedanta, and some European languages; we must have a press, and papers printed in English and in the Vernaculars. When this is done, then I shall know that you have accomplished something. Let the nation show that they are ready to *do*. If you cannot do anything of the kind in India, then let me alone. I have a message to give, let me give it to the people who appreciate it and who will work it out. What care I who takes it? "He who doeth the will of my Father" is my own. . . .

My name should not be made prominent; it is my ideas that I want to see realized. The disciples of all the prophets have always inextricably mixed up the ideas of the Master with the *person*, and at last killed the ideas for the *person*. The disciples of Shri Ramakrishna must guard against doing the same thing. Work for the *idea*, not the person. The Lord bless you.

Yours ever with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

77

BROOKLYN,
20th January, 1895.

. . . I had a premonition of your father's giving up the old body,[1] and it is not my custom to write to anyone when a wave of would-be inharmonious Maya strikes him. But these are the great turning-points in life, and I know that you are unmoved. The surface of the sea rises and sinks alternately, but to the observant soul—the child of light—each sinking reveals more and more of the depth, and of the beds of pearls and coral at the bottom. Coming and going is all pure delusion. The soul never comes nor goes. Where is the place to which it shall go, when all space is *in the soul*? When shall be the time for entering and departing, when all time is in the *soul*?

The earth moves, causing the illusion of the movement of the sun; but the sun does not move. So Prakriti, or Maya, or Nature, is moving, changing, unfolding veil after veil, turning over leaf after leaf of this grand book—while the witnessing soul drinks in knowledge, unmoved, unchanged.

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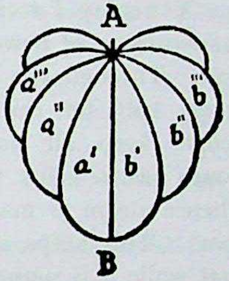
[1] Written to Mrs. Ole Bull.

All souls that ever have been, are, or shall be, are all in the present tense, and—to use a material simile—are all standing at the geometrical point. Because the idea of space does occur in the soul, therefore all that were ours, are ours, and will be ours, *are* always with us, *were* always with us, and *will be* always with us. We are in them. They are in us. Take these cells. Though each separate, they are all nevertheless inseparably joined at A B. There they are one. Each is an individual, yet all are one at the axis A B. None can escape from that axis, and however broken or torn the circumference, yet by standing at the axis, we may enter any one of the chambers. This axis is the Lord. There we are one with Him, all in all, and all in God.



The cloud moves across the face of the moon, creating the illusion that the moon is moving. So nature, body, matter move on, creating the illusion that the soul is moving. Thus we find at last that that instinct (or inspiration?) which men of every race, whether high or low, have had to feel, viz the presence of the departed about them, is true intellectually also.

Each soul is a star, and all stars are set in that infinite azure, that eternal sky, the Lord. There is the root, the reality, the real individuality of each and all. Religion began with the search after some of these stars that had passed beyond our horizon, and ended in finding them all in God, and ourselves in the same place. The whole secret is, then, that your father has given up the old garment he was wearing, and is standing where he was through all eternity. Will he manifest another such garment in this or any other world? I sincerely pray that he may not, until he does so in full consciousness. I pray that none may be dragged anywhither by the unseen power of his own past actions. I pray that all may be free, that is to say, may know that they are free. And if they are to dream again, let us pray that their dreams be all of peace and bliss. . . .

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

78*

U.S.A.,
1895.

My Dear Shashi,

Yesterday I received a letter from you in which there was a smattering of news, but nothing in detail. I am much better now. Through the grace of the Lord I am proof against the severe cold for this year. Oh, the terrible cold! But these people keep all down through scientific knowledge. Every house has its cellar underground, in which there is a big boiler whence steam is made to course day and night through every room. This keeps all the rooms warm, but it has one defect, that while it is summer indoors, it is 30 to 40 degrees below zero outside! Most of the rich people of this country make for Europe during the winter, which is comparatively warm.

Now, let me give you some instructions. This letter is meant for you. Please go through these instructions once a day and act up to them. I have got Sarada's letter—he is doing good work; but now we want organization. To him, Brother Tarak, and others please give my special love and blessings. The reason why I give you these few instructions is that there is an organizing power in you—the Lord has made this known to me—but it is not yet fully developed. Through His blessings it will soon be. That you never lose your centre of gravity is an evidence of this, but it must be both intensive and extensive.

1. All the Shâstras hold that the threefold misery that there is in this world is not natural, hence it is removable.

2. In the Buddha Incarnation the Lord says that the root of the Âdhibhautika misery, or misery arising from other terrestrial beings, is the formation of *classes* (Jâti); in other words, every form of class-distinction, whether based on birth, or acquirements, or wealth is at the bottom of the misery. In the Atman there is no distinction of sex, or Varna or Âshrama,[1] or anything of the kind, and as mud cannot be washed away

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[1] Varnas—The four principal caste, viz Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya. and Shudra. Ashramas—The four orders of life, viz Brahmacharya, Gârhasthya, Vânaprastha, and Sannyâsa.

by mud, it is likewise impossible to bring about oneness by mud, it is likewise impossible to bring about oneness by means of separative ideas.

3. In the Krishna Incarnation He says that the root of all sorts of misery is Avidyâ (Nescience) and that selfless work purifies the mind. But किं कर्म किमकर्मेति —"(Even sages are bewildered to decide) what is work and what is no-work" (Gita).

4. Only that kind of work which develops our spirituality is work. Whatever fosters materiality is no-work.

5. Therefore work and no-work must be regulated by a person's aptitude, his country, and his age.

6. Works such as sacrifices were suited to the olden times, but are not for the modern times.

7. From the date that the Ramakrishna Incarnation was born, has sprung the Satya-Yuga (Golden Age). . . .

8. In this Incarnation atheistic idea . . . will be destroyed by the sword of Jnana (knowledge), and the whole world will be unified by means of Bhakti (devotion) and Prema (Divine Love). Moreover, in this Incarnation, Rajas, or the desire for name and fame, etc., is altogether absent. In other words, blessed is he who acts up to His teachings; whether he accepts Him or not, does not matter.

9. The founders of different sects, in the ancient or modern times, have not been in the wrong. They have done well, but they must do better. Well—better—best.

10. Therefore we must take all up where they are, that is, we must lead them on to higher and higher ideals, without upsetting their own chosen attitude. As to social conditions, those that prevail now are good, but they shall be better—best.

11. There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.

12. Hence, in the Ramakrishna Incarnation, the acceptance of a woman as the Guru, hence His practising in the woman's garb and frame of mind,[1] hence too His preaching the motherhood of women as representations of the Divine Mother.

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[1] For some time Shri Ramakrishna dressed himself as a woman and practised Sâdhanâ conceiving himself to be a woman, to get rid of the sex-idea.

13. Hence it is that my first endeavour is to start a Math for women. This Math shall be the origin of Gârgis and Maitreyis, and women of even higher attainments than these. . . .

14. No great work can be achieved by humbug. It is through love, a passion for truth, and tremendous energy, that all undertakings are accomplished. तत् कुरु पौरुषम्—Therefore, manifest your manhood.

15. There is no need for quarrel or dispute with anybody Give your message and leave others to their own thoughts सत्यमेव जयते नानृतम् —"Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood" तदा किं विवादेन—Why then fight?

. . . Combine seriousness with childlike *naiveté*. Live in harmony with all. Give up all idea of egoism, and entertain no sectarian views. Useless wrangling is a great sin.

. . . From Sarada's letter I came to know that N—Ghosh has compared me with Jesus Christ, and the like. That kind of thing may pass muster in our country, but if you send such comments here in print, there is a chance of my being insulted! I mean, I do not like to hamper anybody's freedom of thought—am I a missionary? If Kali (Abhedananda) has not sent those papers to this country, tell him not to do it. Only the Address will do, I do not want the proceedings. Now many respectable ladies and gentlemen of this country hold me in reverence. The missionaries and others of that ilk have tried their utmost to put me down, but finding it useless have now become quiet. Every undertaking must pass through a lot of obstacles. Truth triumphs if only one pursues a peaceful course. I have no need to reply to what a Mr. Hudson has spoken against me. In the first place, it is unnecessary, and secondly, I shall be bringing myself down to the level of people of Mr. Hudson's type. Are you mad? Shall I fight from here with one Mr. Hudson? Through the Lord's grace, people who are far above Mr. Hudson in rank listen to me with veneration. Please do not send any more papers. Let all that go on in India, it will do no harm. For the Lord's work at one time there was need for that kind of newspaper blazoning. When that is done, there is no more need for it. . . . It is one of the attendant evils of name and fame that you can't have anything private. . . . Before you begin any undertaking, pray to Shri Ramakrishna, and he will show you the right way. We want a big plot of land to begin with, then building and all will come. Slowly our Math is going to raise itself, don't worry about it. . . .

Kali and all others have done good work. Give my love and best wishes to all. Work in unison with the people of Madras, and let someone or other amongst you go there at intervals. Give up for ever the desire for name and fame and power. While I am on earth, Shri Ramakrisna is working through me. So long as you believe in this, there is no danger of any evil for you.

The *Ramakrishna Punthi* (Life of Shri Ramakrishna in Bengali verse) that Akshaya has sent is very good, but there is no glorification of the *Shakti* at the opening, which is a great defect. Tell him to remedy it in the second edition. Always bear this in mind that we are now standing before the gaze of the world, and that people are watching every one of our actions and utterances. Remember this and work.

. . . Be on the look-out for a site for our Math. . . If it be at some little distance from Calcutta, no harm. Wherever we shall build our Math, there we shall have a stir made. Very glad to learn about Mahim Chakravarty. The Andes have turned into the holy Gaya, I see! Where is he? Please give him, Sj. Vijay Goswami and our other friends my cordial greetings. . . . To beat an opponent one needs a sword and buckler, so carefully learn English and Sanskrit. Kali's English is getting nicer everyday, while that of Sarada is deteriorating. Tell Sarada to give up the flowery style. It is extremely difficult to write a flowery style in a foreign tongue. Please convey to him a hundred thousand bravos from me! There's a hero indeed. . . . Well done, all of you! Bravo, lads! The beginning is excellent. Go on in that way. If the adder of jealousy does not come in, there is no fear! माभैः—Cheer up! मद्भक्तानाञ्च ये भक्तास्ते मे भक्ततमा मताः—"Those who serve My devotees are My best devotees". Have all of you a little grave bearing. I am not writing any book on Hinduism at present. But I am jotting down my thoughts. Every religion is an expression, a language to express the same truth, and we must speak to each in his own language. That S—has grasped this, is all right. It will be time enough to look to Hinduism later on. Do you think people in this country would be much attracted if I talk of Hinduism? The very name of narrowness in ideas will scare them away! The real thing is—*the Religion* taught by Shri Ramakrishna, let the Hindus call it Hinduism—and others call it in their own way. Only you must proceed slowly. शनैः पन्थाः —"One must make journeys slowly". Give my blessings to Dinanath, the new recruit. I have very little time to write—always lecture, lecture, lecture. Purity, Patience, Perseverance. . . . You must ask those numerous people who are now paying heed to Shri Ramakrishna's teachings, to help you pecuniarily to a certain extent. How can the Math be maintained unless they help you? You must not be shy of making this plain to all. . . .

There is no gain in hastening my return from this country. In the first place, a little sound made here will resound there a great deal. Then, the people of this country are immensely rich and are bold enough to pay. While the people of our country have neither money nor the least bit of boldness.

You will know everything by degrees. Was Shri Ramakrishna the Saviour of India merely? It is this narrow idea that has brought about India's ruin, and her welfare is an impossibility so long as this is not rooted out. Had I the money I would send each one of you to travel all over the world. No great idea can have a place in the heart unless one steps out of his little corner. It will be verified in time. Every great achievement is done slowly. Such is the Lord's will. . . .

Why didn't any of you write about Daksha and Harish? I shall be glad to know if you watch their whereabouts. That Sanyal is feeling miserable is because his mind is not yet pure like the water of the Ganga. It is not yet selfless, but will be in time. He will have no misery if he can give up the little crookedness and be straightforward. My special loving greetings to Rakhal and Hari. Take great care of them. . . . Never forget that Rakhal was the special object of Shri Ramakrishna's love. Let nothing daunt you, who on earth has the power to snub us so long as the Lord favours us? Even if you are at your last breath, be not afraid. Work on with the intrepidity of a lion but at the same time with the tenderness of a flower. Let this year's Shri Ramakrishna festival be celebrated in great pomp. Let the feeding the quite ordinary—the Prasâda being distributed in earthen plates among the devotees standing in rows. There should be readings from Shri Ramakrishna's Life. Place books like the Vedas and the Vedanta together and perform Arati before them. . . . Avoid issuing invitation cards of the old style. आमन्त्रये भवन्तं साशीर्वादं भगवतो रामकृष्णस्य बहुमानपुरःसरञ्च —"With Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna's blessings and our great esteem we have the pleasure to invite you."—Write some such line, and then write that to defray the expenses of Shri Ramakrishna's Birthday Festival and those of the maintenance of the Math, you want his assistance. That if he likes, he may kindly send the money to such and such, at such and such address, and so on. Also add a page in English. The term "Lord Ramakrishna" has no meaning. You must give it up. Write "Bhagavan" in English characters, and add a line or two in English:

THE ANNIVERSARY OF BHAGAVAN SHRI RAMAKRISHNA

Sir, we have great pleasure in inviting you to join us in celebrating the——th anniversary of Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. For the celebration of this great occasion and for the maintenance of the Alambazar Math funds are absolutely necessary. If you think that the cause is worthy of your sympathy, we shall be very grateful to receive your contribution to the great work.

Yours obediently,
(Name)

If you get more than enough money, spend only a little of it and keep the surplus as a reserve fund to defray your expenses. On the plea of offering the food to the Lord, do not make everybody wait till he is sick, to have a stale and unsavoury dinner. Have two filters made and use that filtered water for both cooking and drinking purposes. Boil the water before filtering. If you do this, you will never more hear of malaria. Keep a strict eye on everybody's health. If you can give up lying on the floor—in other words, if you can get the money to do it, it will be excellent indeed. Dirty clothes are the chief cause of disease. . . . About the food offering let me tell you that only a little Pâyasânna (milk-rice with sugar) will do. He used to love that alone. It is true that the worship-room is a help to many, but it is no use indulging in Râjasika and Tâmasika food. Let the ceremonials give place to a certain extent to a little study of the Gita or the Upanishads or other sacred books. What I mean is this—let there be as little materialism as possible, with the maximum of spirituality. . . . Did Shri Ramakrishna come for this or that particular individual, or for the world at large? if the latter, then you must present him in such a light that the whole world may understand him. *You must not identify yourselves with any life of his written by anybody, nor give your sanction to any.* There is no danger so long as such books do not come out associated with our name. . . . "Say, yea, yea to all and stick to your own."

. . . A thousand thanks to Mahendra Babu for his kindly helping us. He is a very liberal-hearted man. . . . About Sanyal, he will attain the highest good by doing his bit of work attentively, that is, by simply serving Shri Ramakrishna's children. . . . Brother Tarak is doing very good work. Bravo! Well done! That is what we want. Let me see all of you shoot like so many meteors! What is Gangadhar (Akhandananda) doing? Some zemindars in Rajputana respect him. Tell him to get some money from them as Bhikshâ; then he is a man. . . .

Just now I read Akshaya's book. Give him a hundred thousand hearty embraces from me. Through his pen Shri Ramakrishna is manifesting himself. Blessed is Akshaya! Let him recite that *Punthi*[1] before all. He must recite it before all in the Festival. If the work be too large, let him read extracts of it. Well, I do not find a single irrelevant word in it. I cannot tell in words the joy I have experienced by reading his book. Try all of you to give the book an extensive sale. Then ask Akshaya to go from village to village to preach. Well done Akshaya! He is doing his (Shri Ramakrishna's) work. Go from village to village and proclaim to all Shri Ramakrishna's teachings, can there be a more blessed lot than this? I tell you, Akshaya's book and Akshaya himself must electrify the masses. Dear, dear, Akshaya, I bless you with all my heart, my dear brother. May the Lord sit in your tongue! Go and spread his teachings from door to door. There is no need whatever of your becoming a Sannyasin. . . . Akshaya is the future apostle for the masses of Bengal. Take great care of Akshaya; his faith and devotion have borne fruit.

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[1] *Shri Ramakrishna-Punthi*, a voluminous book in Bengali verse, by Akshay Kumar Sen, a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.

Ask Akshaya to write these few points in the third section of his book. "The Propagation of the Faith".

1. Whatever the Vedas, the Vedanta, and all other Incarnation have done in the past, Shri Ramakrishna lived to practise in the course of a single life.

2. One cannot understand the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Incarnations, and so forth, without understanding *his* life. For he was the explanation.

From the very date that he was born, has sprung the Satya-Yuga (Golden Age) Henceforth there is an end to all sorts of distinctions, and everyone down to the Chandâla will be a sharer in the Divine Love. The distinction between man and woman, between the rich and the poor, the literate and illiterate, Brahmins and Chandâlas—he lived to root out all. And he was the harbinger of Peace—the separation between Hindus and Mohammedans, between Hindus and Christians, all are now things of the past. That fight about distinction that there was, belonged to another era. In this Satya-Yuga the tidal wave of Shri Ramakrishna's Love has unified all.

Tell him to expand these ideas and write them in his own style.

Whoever—man or woman—will worship Shri Ramakrishna, be he or she ever so low, will be then and there converted into the very highest. Another thing, the Motherhood of God is prominent in this Incarnation. He used to dress himself as a woman—he was, as it were, our Mother—and we must likewise look upon all women as the reflections of the Mother. In India there are two great evils. Trampling on the women, and grinding the poor through caste restrictions. He was the Saviour of women, Saviour of the masses, Saviour of all, high and low. And let Akshaya introduce his worship in every home —Brahmin or Chandâla, man or woman—everyone has the right to worship him. Whoever will worship him only with devotion shall be blessed for ever.

Tell him to write in this strain. Never mind anything—the Lord will be at his side.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. . . . Ask Sanyal to send me a copy each of the *Nârada* and *Shândilya Sutras,* and one of the *Yogavâsistha,* that has been translated in Calcutta. I want the English translation of the last, not a Bengali edition. . . .

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NEW YORK,
24th Jan., 1895(6?).

DEAR MRS. BULL,

Your letter to Sturdy has been sent over to me. It was very kind of you to write that note. This year, I am afraid; I am getting overworked, as I feel the strain. I want a rest badly. So it is very good as you say that the Boston work be taken up in the end of March. By the end of April I will start for England.

Land can be had in large plots in the Catskills for very little money. There is a plot of 101 acress for $200. The money I have ready, only I cannot buy the land in my name. You are the only friend in this country in whom I have perfect trust. If you consent, I will buy the land in your name. The students will go there in summer and build cottages or camps as they like and practise meditation. Later on, if they can collect funds, they may build something up. I am sorry, you cannot come just now. Tomorrow will be the last Sunday lecture of this month. The first Sunday of next month there will be a lecture in Brooklyn; the rest, three in New York, with which I will close this year's New York lectures.

I have worked my best. If there is any seed of truth in it, it will come to life. So I have no anxiety about anything. I am also getting tired of lecturing and having classes. After a few months' work in England I will go to India and hide myself absolutely for some years or for ever. I am satisfied in my conscience that I did not remain an idle Swami. I have a note-book which has travelled with me all over the world. I find these words written seven years ago—"Now to seek a corner and lay myself there to die!" Yet all this Karma remained. I hope I have worked it out. I hope the Lord will give me freedom from this preaching and adding good bondages.

"If you have known the Âtman as the one existence and that nothing else exists, for whom, for what desire, do you trouble yourself?" Through Mâyâ all this doing good etc., came into my brain—now they are leaving me. I get more and more convinced that there is no other object in work except the purification of the soul—to make it fit for knowledge. This world with its good and evil will go on in various forms. Only the evil and good will take new names and new seats. My soul is hankering after peace and rest eternal undisturbed.

"Live alone, live alone. He who is alone never comes into conflict with others—never disturbs others, is never disturbed by others." I long, oh! I long for my rags, my shaven head, my sleep under the trees, and my food from begging! India is the only place where, with all its faults, the soul finds its freedom, its God. All this Western pomp is only vanity, only bondage of the soul. Never more in my life I realized more forcibly the vanity of the world. May the Lord break the bondage of all—may all come out of Maya—is the constant prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.

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54 W. 33RD STREET, N.Y.,
1st February, 1895.

DEAR SISTER,[1]

I just received your beautiful note. . . . Well, sometimes it is a good discipline to be forced to work for work's sake, even to the length of not being allowed to enjoy the fruits of one's labour. . . . I am very glad of your criticisms and am not sorry at all. The other day at Miss Thursby's I had an excited argument with a Presbyterian gentleman, who, as usual, got very hot, angry, and abusive. However, I was afterwards severely reprimanded by Mrs. Bull for this, as such things hinder my work. So, it seems, is your opinion.

I am glad you write about it just now, because I have been giving a good deal of thought to it. In the first place, I am not at all sorry for these things—perhaps that may disgust you—it may. I know full well how good it is for one's worldly prospects to be *sweet*. I do everything to be *sweet,* but when it comes to a horrible compromise with the truth within, then I stop. I do not believe in ***humility***. I believe in *Samadarshitva*—same state of mind with regard to all. The duty of the ordinary man is to obey the commands of his "God", society; but the children of light never do so. This is an eternal law. One accommodates himself to surroundings and social opinion and gets all good things from society, the giver of all good to such. The other stands alone and draws society up towards him. The accommodating man finds a path of roses; the non-accommodating, one of thorns. But the worshippers of "Vox populi" go to annihilation in a moment; the children of truth *live for ever*.

I will compare truth to a corrosive substance of infinite power. It burns its way in wherever it falls—in soft substance at once, hard granite slowly, but it must. What is writ is writ. I am so, so sorry, Sister, that I cannot make myself sweet and accommodating to every black falsehood. But I cannot. I have suffered for it all my life. But I cannot. I have essayed and essayed. But I cannot. At last I have given it up. The Lord is great. He will not allow me to become a hypocrite. Now let what is in come out. I have not found a way that will please all, and I cannot but be what I am, true to my own self. "Youth and beauty vanish, life and wealth vanish, name and fame vanish, even the mountains crumble into dust. Friendship and love vanish. Truth alone abides." God of Truth, be Thou alone my guide! I am too old to change now into milk and honey. Allow me to remain as I am. "Without fear—without shopkeeping, caring neither for friend nor foe, do thou hold on to Truth, Sannyasin, and from this moment give up this world and the next and all that are to come—their enjoyments and their vanities. Truth, be thou alone my guide." I have no desire for wealth or name or fame or enjoyments, Sister—they are dust unto me. I wanted to help my brethren. I have not the *tact to earn money,* bless the Lord. What reason is there for me to conform to the vagaries of the world around me and not obey the voice of Truth within? The mind is still weak, Sister, it sometimes mechanically clutches at earthly help. But I am not afraid. Fear is the greatest sin my religion teaches.

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[1] Miss Mary Hale.

The last fight with the Presbyterian priest and the long fight afterwards with Mrs. Bull showed me in a clear light what Manu says to the Sannyasin. "Live alone, walk alone." All friendship, all love, is only limitation. There never was a friendship, especially of women, which was not exacting. O great sages! You were right. One cannot serve the God of Truth who leans upon somebody. Be still, my soul! Be alone! and the Lord is with you. Life is nothing! Death is a delusion! All this is not, God alone is! Fear not, my soul! Be alone. Sister, the way is long, the time is short, evening is approaching. I have to go home soon. I have no time to give my manners a finish. I cannot find time to deliver my message. You are good, you are so kind, I will do anything for you; and do not be angry, I see you all are mere children.

Dream no more! Oh, dream no more, my soul! In one word, I have a message to give, I have no time to be sweet to the world, and every attempt at sweetness makes me a hypocrite. I will die a thousand deaths rather than lead a jelly-fish existence and yield to every requirement of this foolish world, no matter whether it be my own country or a foreign country. You are mistaken, utterly mistaken, if you think I have a *work,* as Mrs. Bull thinks; I have no *work* under or beyond the sun. I have a message, and I will give it after my own fashion. I will neither Hinduise my message, nor Christianise it, nor make it any "ise" in the world. I will only my-ise it and that is all. *Liberty, Mukti,* is all my religion. and everything that tries to curb it, I will avoid by fight or flight. Pooh! I try to pacify the priests!! Sister, do not take this amiss. But you are babies and babies must submit to be taught. You have not yet drunk of that fountain which makes "reason, unreason, mortal, immortal, this world a zero and of man a God". Come out, if you can, of this network of foolishness they call this *world.* Then I will call you indeed brave and free. If you cannot, cheer those that dare dash this false God, society, to the ground and trample on its unmitigated hypocrisy; if you cannot cheer them pray, be silent, but do not try to drag them down again into the mire with such false nonsense as *compromise* and becoming nice and sweet.

I hate this world, this dream, this horrible nightmare, with its churches and chicaneries, its books and blackguardisms, its fair faces and false hearts, its howling righteousness on the surface and utter hollowness beneath, and, above all, its sanctified shopkeeping. What! measure my soul according to what the bond-slaves of the world say?—Pooh! Sister you do not know the Sannyasin. "He stands on the heads of the Vedas!" say the Vedas, because he is free from churches and sects and religions and prophets and books and all of that ilk! Missionary or no missionary, let them howl and attack me with all they can, I take them as Bhartrihari says, "Go thou thy ways, Sannyasin! Some will say, 'Who is this mad man?' others, 'Who is this Chandâla?' Others will know thee to be a sage. Be glad at the prattle of the worldlings." But when they attack, know that "The elephant passing through the market-place is always beset by curs, but he cares not. He goes straight on *his own way*. So it is always; when a great soul appears, there will be numbers to bark after him."[1]

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[1] Tulasidasa.

I am living with Landsberg at 54 W. 33rd Street. He is a brave and noble soul, Lord bless him. Sometimes I go to the Guernseys' to sleep.

Lord bless you all ever and ever—and may He lead you quickly out of this big humbug, the world! May you never be enchanted by this old witch, the world! May Shankara help you! May Umâ open the door of truth for you and take away all your delusions!

Yours with love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

81

19, W. 38 ST.,
NEW YORK,
1895.

DEAR ALASINGA,

. . . Meddle not with so-called social reform, for there cannot be any reform without spiritual reform first. Who told you that I want social reform? Not I. Preach the Lord—say neither good nor bad about the superstitions and diets. Do not lose heart, do not lose faith in your Guru, do not lose faith in God. So long as you possess these three, nothing can harm you, my child. I am growing stronger every day. Work on, my brave boys.

Ever yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

82*

54, W. 33RD ST., NEW YORK,
9th February, 1895.

DEAR SANYAL,

. . . Paramahamsa Deva was my Guru, and whatever I may think of him in point of greatness, why should the world think like me? And if you press the point hard, you will spoil everything. The idea of worshipping the Guru as God is nowhere to be met with outside Bengal, for other people are not yet ready to take up that ideal. . . .

I shall consider myself absolved from a debt of obligation when I succeed in purchasing some land for Mother.[1] I don't care for anything after that.

In this dire winter I have travelled across mountains and over snows at dead of night and collected a little fund and I shall have peace of mind when a plot is secured for Mother.

Henceforth address my letters as above, which is to be my permanent seat from now.

Try to send me an English translation of the *Yogavâsishtha Râmâyana*. . . .

Don't forget those books I asked for before, viz. Sanskrit *Nârada* and *Shândilya Sutras*. आशा हि परमं दुःखं नैराश्यं परमं सुखम् —"Hope is the greatest of miseries, the highest bliss lies in giving up hope."

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

83

228 W. 39TH STREET,
NEW YORK,
10th February, 1895(6?).

DEAR SISTER,[2]

I was astonished at learning that you have not received my letter yet. I wrote immediately after the receipt of yours and also sent you some booklets of three lectures I delivered in New York. These Sunday public lectures are now taken down in shorthand and printed. Three of them made two little pamphlets several copies of which I have forwarded to you. I shall be in New York two weeks more and then I go to Detroit to come back to Boston for a week or two.

My health is very much broken down this year by constant work. I am very nervous. I have not slept a single night soundly this winter. I am sure I am working too much, yet a big work awaits me in England.

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[1] The Holy Mother, Shri Sarada Devi.

[2] Miss Mary Hale.

I will have to go through it, and then I hope to reach India and have a rest all the rest of my life. I have tried at least to do my best for the world leaving the result to the Lord.

Now I am longing for rest. Hope I will get some and the Indian people will give me up. How I would like to become dumb for some years and not talk at all.

I was not made for these struggles and fights of the world. I am naturally dreamy and restful. I am a born idealist, can only live in a world of dreams; the very touch of fact disturbs my visions and makes me unhappy. Thy will be done!

I am ever, ever grateful to you four sisters; to you I owe everything I have in this country. May you be ever blessed and happy. Wherever I be, you will always be remembered with the deepest gratitude and sincerest love. The whole life is a succession of dreams. My ambition is to be a conscious dreamer, that is all. My love to all—to Sister Josephine.

Ever your affectionate brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

84

54 W. 33RD ST., NEW YORK,
14th February, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

Accept my heartfelt gratitude for your motherly advice. I hope I will be able to carry them out in life.

How can I express my gratitude to you for what you have already done for me and my work, and my eternal gratitude to you for your offering to do something more this year. But I sincerely believe that you ought to turn all your help to Miss Farmer's Greenacre work this year. India can wait as she is waiting centuries, and an immediate work at hand should always have the preference.

Again, according to Manu, collecting funds even for a good work is not good for a Sannyasin, and I have begun to feel that the old sages were right. "Hope is the greatest misery, despair is the greatest happiness." It appears like a hallucination. I am getting out of them. I was in these childish ideas of doing this and doing that.

"Give up all desire and be at peace. Have neither friends nor foes, and live alone. Thus shall we travel having neither friends nor foes, neither pleasure nor pain, neither desire nor jealousy, injuring no creatures, being the cause of injury to no creatures—from mountain to mountain, from village to village, preaching the name of the Lord."

"Seek no help from high or low, from above or below. Desire nothing—and look upon this vanishing panorama as a witness, and let it pass."

Perhaps these mad desires were necessary to bring me over to this country. And I thank the Lord for the experience.

I am very happy now. Between Mr. Landsberg and me, we cook some rice and lentils or barley and quietly eat it, and write something or read or receive visits from poor people who want to learn something, and thus I feel I am more a Sannyasin now than I ever was in America.

"In wealth is the fear of poverty, in knowledge the fear of ignorance, in beauty the fear of age, in fame the fear of backbiters, in success the fear of jealousy, even in body is the fear of death. Everything in this earth is fraught with fear. He alone is fearless who has given up everything."[1]

I went to see Miss Corbin the other day, and Miss Farmer and Miss Thursby were also there. We had a nice half-hour, and she wants me to hold some classes in her home from next Sunday.

I am no more seeking for these things. If they come, the Lord be blessed, if not, blessed more be He.

Again accept my eternal gratitude.

Your devoted son,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] Bhartrihari, *Vairâgyaśatakam*, 31.

85

U.S.A.,
6th March, 1895.

DEAR ALASINGA,

. . . Do not for a moment think the "Yankees" are practical in religion. In that the Hindu alone is practical, the Yankee in money-making, so that as soon as I depart, the whole thing will disappear. Therefore I want to have a solid ground under my feet before I depart. Every work should be made thorough. . . . You need not insist upon preaching Shri Ramakrishna. Propagate his ideas first, though I know the world always wants the Man first, then the idea. . . . Do not figure out big plans at first, but begin slowly, feel your ground, and proceed, up and up.

. . . Work on, my brave boys. We shall see the light some day.

Harmony and peace!. . . Let things slowly grow. Rome was not built in a day. The Maharaja of Mysore is dead—one of our greatest hopes. Well! the Lord is great. He will send others to help the cause.

Send some Kushâsanas (small sitting-mats) if you can.

Yours ever with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

86

54 W. 33RD ST., NEW YORK,
21st March, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I am astonished to hear the scandals the Ramabai circles are indulging in about me. Don't you see, Mrs. Bull, that however a man may conduct himself, there will always be persons who invent the blackest lies about him. At Chicago I had such things every day against me!

And these women are invariably the very Christian of Christians! . . . I am going to have a series of paid lectures in my rooms (downstairs), which will seat about a hundred persons, and that will cover the expenses. . . . Miss Hamlin has been very kind to me and does all she can to help me.

My Master used to say that these names as, Hindu, Christian, etc., stand as great bars to all brotherly feelings between man and man. We must try to break them down first. They have lost all their good powers and now only stand as baneful influences under whose black magic even the best of us behave like demons. Well, we will have to work hard and must succeed.

That is why I desire so much to have a centre. Organization has its faults, no doubt, but without that nothing can be done. And here, I am afraid, I will have to differ from you—that no one ever succeeded in keeping society in good humour and at the same time did great works. One must work as the dictate comes from within, and then if it is right and good, society is bound to veer round, perhaps centuries after one is dead and gone. We must plunge heart and soul and body into the work. And until we be ready to sacrifice everything else to one *Idea* and to *one* alone, we *never, never* will see the Light.

Those that want to help mankind must take their own pleasure and pain, name and fame, and all sorts of interests, and make a bundle of them and throw them into the sea, and then come to the Lord. This is what all the masters said and *did*.

I went to Miss Corbin's last Saturday and told her that I would not be able to come to hold classes any more. Was it ever in the history of the world that any great work was done by the rich? It is the heart and the brain that do it ever and ever and not the purse.

My *idea* and all my life with it—and to *God* for help; to none else! This is the only secret of success. I am sure you are one with me here. My love to Mrs. Thursby and Mrs. Adams.

Ever yours in grateful affection,
VIVEKANANDA.

87

54 W. 33RD ST., NEW YORK,
11th April, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

. . . I am going away to the country tomorrow to see Mr. Leggett for a few days. A little fresh air will do me good, I hope.

I have given up the project of removing from this house just now, as it will be too expensive, and moreover it is not advisable to change just now. I am working it up slowly.

. . . I send you herewith the letter from H. H. the Maharaja of Khetri, also enclose the slip on Garjan oil for leprosy. Miss Hamlin has been helping me a good deal. I am very grateful to her. She is very kind and, I hope, sincere. She wants me to be introduced to the "right kind of people". This is the second edition of the "Hold yourself steady" business, I am afraid. The only "right sort of people" are those whom the Lord sends—that is what I understand in my life's experience. They alone can and will help me. As for the rest, Lord help them in a mass and save me from them.

Every one of my friends thought it would end in nothing, this my getting up quarters all by myself, and that no *ladies would ever come here.* Miss Hamlin especially thought that "she" or "her right sort of people" were *way up* from such things as to go and listen to a man who lives by himself in a poor lodging. But the "right kind" came for all that, day and night, and she too. Lord! how hard it is for man to believe in Thee and Thy mercies! Shiva! Shiva! Where is the right kind and where is the bad, mother? It is all *He*! In the tiger and in the lamb, in the saint and sinner all *He*! In Him I have taken my refuge—body, soul and Atman. Will He leave me now after carrying me in His arms all my life? Not a drop will be in the ocean, not a twig in the deepest forest, not a crumb in the house of the god of wealth, if the Lord is not merciful. Streams will be in the desert and the beggar will have plenty, if He wills it. He seeth the sparrow's fall. Are these but words, mother, or literal, actual life?

Truce to this "right sort of presentation". Thou art my right, Thou my wrong, my Shiva. Lord, since a child I have taken refuse in Thee. Thou wilt be with me in the tropics or at the poles, on the tops of mountains or in the depth of oceans. My stay—my guide in life—my refuge—my friends—my teacher—my God—my real Self, Thou wilt never leave me, *never*. I know it for sure. Sometimes I become weak, being alone and struggling against odds, my God; and I think of human help. Save Thou me for ever from these weaknesses, and may I never, never seek for help from any being but Thee. If a man puts his trust in another good man, he is never betrayed, never forsaken. Wilt Thou forsake me, Father of all good, Thou who knowest that *all* my life I am Thy servant and Thine alone? Wilt Thou give me over to be played upon by others, or dragged down by evil?

He will never leave me, I am sure, mother.

Your ever obedient son,
VIVEKANANDA.

88

U.S.A.,
11th April, 1895.

MY DEAR SHASHI,

. . . You write that you have recovered from your illness; but you must henceforth be very careful. Late dinners, or unwholesome food, or living in a stinking place may bring on a relapse, and make it hard to escape the clutches of malaria. First of all you should hire a small garden-house—you may get one for thirty or forty rupees. Secondly, see that cooking and drinking water be filtered—a bamboo filter of a big size will do. Water is the cause of all sorts of disease. It is not the clearness or dirtiness of water, but its being full of disease germs, that causes disease. Let the water be boiled and filtered. You must all pay attention to your health first. A cook, a servant, clean beds, and timely meals—these are absolutely necessary. Please see that all these suggestions be carried out *in toto*. . . . The success of your undertakings depends wholly upon your mutual love. There is no good in store so long as malice and jealousy and egotism will prevail. . . . Kali's pamphlet is very well written and has no exaggerations. Know that talking ill of others in private is a sin. You must wholly avoid it. Many things may occur to the mind, but it gradually makes a mountain of a molehill if you try to express them. Everything is ended if you forgive and forget. It is welcome news that Shri Ramakrishna's festival was celebrated with great éclat. You must try so that there is a muster of a hundred thousand people next year. Put your energies together to start a magazine. Shyness won't do any more. . . . He who has infinite patience and infinite energy at his back will alone succeed. You must pay special attention to study. Do you understand? You must not huddle together too many fools. I shall be glad if you bring together a few real men. Why, I don't hear even a single one opening his lips. You distributed sweets at the festival, and there was singing by some parties, mostly idlers. True, but I don't hear what spiritual food you have given. So long as that *nil admirari* attitude is not gone, you will not be able to do anything, and none of you will have courage. Bullies are always cowards.

Take up everyone with sympathy, whether he believes in Shri Ramakrishna or not. If anybody comes to you for vain dispute, politely withdraw yourselves. . . . You must express your sympathy with people of all sects. When these cardinal virtues will be manifested in you, then only you will be able to work with great energy. Otherwise, mere taking the name of the Guru will not do. However, there is no doubt that this year's festival has been a great success, and you reserve special thanks for it; but you must push forward, do you see? What is Sharat doing? Never shall you be able to know anything if you persist in pleading ignorance. . . . We want something of a higher tone—that will appeal to the intellect of the learned. It won't do merely to get up musical parties and all that. Not only will this festival be his memorial, but also the central union of an intense propaganda of his doctrines. . . . All will come in good time. But at times I fret and stamp like a leashed hound. Onward and forward, my old watchword. I am doing well. No use going back to India in a hurry. Summon all your energies and set yourselves to work, heart and soul, that will really be heroic.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

89

54 W. 33RD ST.,
NEW YORK,
24th April, 1895.

DEAR FRIEND,[1]

I am perfectly aware that although some truth underlies the mass of mystical thought which has burst upon the Western world of late, it is for the most part full of motives unworthy or insane. For this reason, I have never had anything to do with these phases of religion, either in India or elsewhere, and mystics as a class are not very favourable to me. . . .

I quite agree with you that only the Advaita philosophy can save mankind, whether in East or West, from "devil worship" and kindred superstitions, giving tone and strength to the very nature of man. India herself requires this, quite as much or even more than the West. Yet it is hard uphill work, for we have first to create a taste, then teach, and lastly proceed to build up the whole fabric.

Perfect sincerity, holiness, gigantic intellect, and an all-conquering will. Let only a handful of men work with these, and the whole world will be revolutionised. I did a good deal of platform work in this country last year, and received plenty of applause, but found that I was only working for myself. It is the patient upbuilding of character, the intense struggle to *realize* the truth, which alone will tell in the future of humanity. So this year I am hoping to work along this line—training up to practical Advaita realization a small band of men and women. I do not know how far I shall succeed. The West is the field for work if a man wants to benefit humanity, rather than his own particular sect or country. I agree perfectly as to your idea of a magazine. But I have no business capacity at all to do these things. I can teach and preach, and sometimes write. But I have intense faith in Truth. The Lord will send help and hands to work with me. Only let me be perfectly pure, perfectly sincere, and perfectly unselfish.

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[1] E. T. Sturdy of London.

"Truth alone triumphs, not untruth; through truth alone stretches the way to the Lord" (Atharva-Veda). He who gives up the little self for the world will find the whole universe his. . . . I am very uncertain about coming to England. I know no one here, and here I am doing some works. The Lord will guide in His own time.

90

19 W. 38TH ST.,
NEW YORK,

DEAR FRIEND,[1]

I received your last duly, and as I had a previous arrangement to come to Europe by the end of this August, I take your invitation as a Divine Call.

"Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone lies the way to Devayâna (the way to the gods)." Those who think that a little sugar-coating of untruth helps the spread of truth are mistaken and will find in the long run that a single drop of poison poisons the whole mass. . . . The man who is pure, and who dares, does all things. May the Lord ever protect you from illusion and delusion! I am ever ready to work with you, and the Lord will send us friends by the hundred if only we be our own friends first. "The Âtman alone is the friend of the Atman."

Europe has always been the source of social, and Asia of spiritual power; and the whole history of the world is the tale of the varying combinations of those two powers. Slowly a new leaf is being turned in the story of humanity. The signs of this are everywhere. Hundreds of new plans will be created and destroyed. Only the fit will survive, and what but the true and the good is the fit?

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] E. T. Sturdy.

91

U.S.A.,
2nd May, 1895.

DEAR S——,

So you have made up your mind to renounce the world. I have sympathy with your desire. There is nothing so high as renunciation of self. But you must not forget that to forgo your own favourite desire for the welfare of those that depend upon you is no small sacrifice. Follow the spotless life and teachings of Shri Ramakrishna and look after the comforts of your family. You do your own duty, and leave the rest to Him.

Love makes no distinction between man and man, between an Aryan and a Mlechchha, between a Brâhmana and a Pariah, nor even between a man and a woman. Love makes the whole universe as one's own home. True progress is slow but sure. Work among those young men who can devote heart and soul to this one duty—the duty of raising the masses of India. Awake them, unite them, and inspire them with this spirit of renunciation; it depends wholly on the young people of India.

Cultivate the virtue of obedience, but you must not sacrifice your own faith. No centralization is possible unless there is obedience to superiors. No great work can be done without this centralization of the individual forces. The Calcutta Math is the main centre; the members of all other branches must act in unity and conformity with the rules of that centre.

Give up jealousy and conceit. Learn to work unitedly for others. This is the great need of our country.

Yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

92

NEW YORK,
5th May, 1895.

DEAR BABIES,[1]

What I expected has come. I always thought that although Prof. Max Müller in all his writings on the Hindu religion adds in the last a derogatory remark, he must see the whole truth in the long run. As soon as you can, get a copy of his last book *Vedantism*; there you will find him swallowing the whole of it—*reincarnation* and all.

Of course you will not find it difficult at all to understand, as it is only a part of what I have been telling you all this time.

Many points you will find smack of my paper in Chicago.

I am glad now the old man has seen the truth, because that is the only way to have religion in the face of modern research and science.

Hope you are enjoying Todd's *Rajasthan.*

With all love, your brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. When is Miss Mary coming to Boston?—V.

93

U.S.A.,
6th May, 1895.

DEAR ALASINGA,

This morning I received your last letter and the first volume of the Bhâshya of Râmânujâcharya. A few days ago I received another letter from you. Also I received a letter from Mr. Mani Iyer. I am doing well and going on in the same old rate. You mention about the lectures of Mr. Lund. I do not know who he is or where he is. He may be some one lecturing in Churches;

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[1] The Hale Sisters.

for had he big platforms, we would have heard of him. Maybe, he gets them reported in some newspapers and sends them to India; and the missionaries may be making trade out of it. Well, so far I guess from the tone of your letters. It is no public affair here to call forth any defence from us; for in that case I will have to fight hundreds of them here every day. For India is now in the air, and the orthodox including Dr. Barrows and all the rest are struggling hard to put out the fire. In the second place, every one of these orthodox lectures against India must have a good deal of abuse hurled against me. If you hear some of the filthy stories the orthodox men and women invent against me, you will be astonished. Now, do you mean to say that a Sannyasin should go about defending himself against the brutal and cowardly attacks of these self-seeking men and women? I have some very influential friends here who, now and then, give them their quietus. Again, why should I waste my energies defending Hinduism if the Hindus all go to sleep? What are you three hundred millions of people doing there, especially those that are so proud of their learning etc.? Why do you not take up the fighting and leave me to teach and preach? Here am I struggling day and night in the midst of strangers. . . . What help does India send? Did the world ever see a nation with less patriotism than the Indian? If you could send and maintain for a few years a dozen well-educated strong men, to preach in Europe and America, you would do immense service to India, both morally and politically. Every man who morally sympathises with India becomes a political friend. Many of the Western people think of you as a nation of half-naked savages, and therefore only fit to be whipped into civilization. If you three hundred millions become cowed by the missionaries—you cowards—and dare not say a word, what can one man do in a far distant land? Even what I have done, you do not deserve.

Why do you not send your defences to the American magazines? What prevents you? You race of cowards—physical, moral, and spiritual! You animals fit to be treated as you are with two ideas before you—lust and money—you want to prod a Sannyasin to a life of constant fighting, and you are afraid of the "Saheb logs", even missionaries! And you will do great things, pish! Why not some of you write a beautiful defence and send it to the Arena Publishing Company of Boston? The *Arena* is a magazine which will gladly publish it and perhaps pay you hard money. So far it ends. Think of this when you will be tempted to be a fool. Think that up to date every blackguard of a Hindu that had hitherto come to Western lands had too often criticized his own faith and country in order to get praise or money. You know that I did not come to seek name and fame; it was forced upon me. Why shall I go back to India? Who will help me? . . . You are children, you prattle you do not know what. Where are the men in Madras who will give up the world to preach religion? Worldliness and realization of God cannot go together. I am the one man who dared defend his country, and I have given them such ideas as they never expected from a Hindu. There are many who are against me, but I will never be a coward like you. There are also thousands in the country who are my friends, and hundreds who would follow me unto death; every year they will increase, and if I live and work with them, my ideals of life and religion will be fulfilled. Do you see?

I do not hear much now about the Temple Universal that was to be built in America; yet I have a firm footing in New York, the very centre of American life, and so my work will go on. I am taking several of my disciples to a summer retreat to finish their training in Yoga and Bhakti and Jnâna, and then they will be able to help carry the work on. Now my boys, go to work.

Within a month I shall be in a position to send some money for the paper. Do not go about begging from the Hindu beggars. I will do it all *myself* with my own brain and strong right hand. I do not want the help of any man here or in India. . . . Do not press too much the Ramakrishna Avatâra.

Now I will tell you my discovery. All of religion is contained in the Vedanta, that is, in the three stages of the Vedanta philosophy, the Dvaita, Vishishtâdvaita, and Advaita; one comes after the other. These are the three stages of spiritual growth in man. Each one is necessary. This is the essential of religion; the Vedanta applied to the various ethnic customs and creeds of India is Hinduism. The first stage, i.e. Dvaita, applied to the ideas of the ethnic groups of Europe is Christianity; as applied to the Semitic groups, Mohammedanism. The Advaita as applied in its Yoga-perception form is Buddhism, etc. Now by religion is meant the Vedanta; the applications must vary according to the different needs, surroundings, and other circumstances of different nations. You will find that although the philosophy is the same, the Shâktas, Shaivas, etc., apply it each to their own special cult and *forms*. Now, in your journal write article after article on these three systems, showing their harmony as one following after the other, and at the same time keeping off the ceremonial forms altogether. That is, preach the philosophy, the spiritual part, and let people suit it to their own forms. I wish to write a book on this subject, therefore I wanted the three Bhashyas; but only one volume of the Ramanuja (Bhashya) has reached me as yet.

The American Theosophists have seceded from the others, and now they hate India. Poor things! And Sturdy of England who has lately been in India and met my brother Shivananda wrote me a letter wanting to know when I go over to England. I wrote him a nice letter. What about Babu Akshay Kumar Ghosh? I do not hear anything from him more. Give the missionaries and others their dues. Get up some of our very strong men and write a nice strong, but good-toned article on the present religious revival in India and send it to some American magazine. I am acquainted with only one or two of them. You know I am not much of a writer. I am not in the habit of going from door to door begging. I sit quiet and let things come to me. . . . Now, my children, I could have made a grand success in the way of organizing here, if I were a worldly hypocrite. Alas! That is all of religion here; money and name=priest; money and lust=layman. I am to create a new order of humanity here, who are sincere believers in God and care nothing for the world. This must be slow, very slow. In the meantime you go on with your work, and I shall steer my boat straight ahead. The journal must not be flippant but steady, calm and high-toned. . . . Get hold of a band of fine, steady writers. . . . Be perfectly unselfish, be steady and work on. We will do great things; do not fear. . . . One thing more. Be the servant of all, and do not try in the least to govern others. That will excite jealousy and destroy everything. . . . Go on. You have worked wonderfully well. We do not wait for help, we will work it out, my boy, be self-reliant, faithful, and patient. Do not antagonise my other friends, live in harmony with all. My eternal love to all.

Ever yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Nobody will come to help you if you put yourself forward as a leader. . . . Kill self first if you want to succeed.

94

May(?) *1895.*

"*Whenever virtue subsides, and wickedness raises its head, I manifest Myself to restore the glory of religion*"—are the words, noble Prince,[1] of the Eternal One, in the holy Gitâ, striking the keynote of the pulsating ebb and flow of the spiritual energy in the universe.

These changes are manifesting themselves again and again in rhythms peculiar to themselves, and like every other tremendous change, though affecting, more or less, every particle within their sphere of action, they show their effects more intensely upon those particles which are naturally susceptible to their power.

As in a universal sense, the primal state is a state of sameness of the qualitative forces—a disturbance of this equilibrium and all succeeding struggles to regain it, composing what we call the manifestation of nature, this universe, which state of things remains as long as the primitive sameness is not reached —so, in a restricted sense on our own earth, differentiation and its inevitable counterpart, this struggle towards homogeneity, must remain as long as the human race shall remain as such, creating strongly marked peculiarities between ethnic divisions, sub-races, and even down to individuals in all parts of the world.

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[1] The Maharaja of Khetri. The letter was written in reply to his address dated the 4th March, 1895.

In this world of impartial division and balance, therefore, each nation represents, as it were, a wonderful dynamo for the storage and distribution of a particular species of energy, and amidst all other possessions that particular property shines forth as the special characteristic of that race. And as any upheaval in any particular part of human nature, though affecting others more or less, stirs to its very depth that nation of which it is a special characteristic, and from which as a centre it generally starts, so any commotion in the religious world is sure to produce momentous changes in India, that land which again and again has had to furnish the centre of the widespread religious upheavals; for, above all India is the land of religion.

Each man calls that alone real which helps him to realize his ideal. To the worldly-minded, everything that can be converted into money is real, that which cannot be so converted is unreal. To the man of a domineering spirit, anything that will conduce to his ambition of ruling over his fellow men is real—the rest is naught; and man finds nothing in that which does not echo back the heart-beats of his special love in life.

Those whose only aim is to barter the energies of life for gold, or name, or any other enjoyment; those to whom the tramp of embattled cohorts is the only manifestation of power; those to whom the enjoyments of the senses are the only bliss that life can give—to these, India will ever appear as an immense desert whose every blast is deadly to the development of life, as it is known by them.

But to those whose thirst for life has been quenched for ever by drinking from the stream of immortality that flows from far away beyond the world of the senses, whose souls have cast away, as a serpent, its slough, the threefold bondages of lust, gold, and fame, who, from their height of calmness, look with love and compassion upon the petty quarrels and jealousies and fights for little gilded puff-balls, filled with dust, called "enjoyment" by those under a sense-bondage; to those whose accumulated force of past good deeds has caused the scales of ignorance to fall off from their eyes, making them see through the vanity of name and form—to such wheresoever they be, India, the motherland and eternal mine of spirituality, stands transfigured, a beacon of hope to every one in search of Him who is the only real Existence in a universe of vanishing shadows.

The majority of mankind can only understand power when it is presented to them in a concrete form, fitted to their perceptions. To them, the rush and excitement of war, with its power and spell, is something very tangible, and any manifestation of life that does not come like a whirlwind, bearing down everything before it, is to them as death. And India, for centuries at the feet of foreign conquerers, without any idea or hope of resistance, without the least solidarity among its masses, without the least idea of patriotism, must needs appear to such, as a land of rotten bones, a lifeless putrescent mass.

It is said—the fittest alone survive. How is it, then, that this most unfitted of all races, according to commonly accepted ideas, could bear the most awful misfortunes that ever befell a race, and yet not show the least signs of decay? How is it that, while the multiplying powers of the so-called vigorous and active races are dwindling every day, the immoral (?) Hindu shows a power of increase beyond them all? Great laurels are due, no doubt, to those who can deluge the world with blood at a moment's notice; great indeed is the glory of those who, to keep up a population of a few millions in plenty, have to starve half the population of the earth; but is no credit due to those who can keep hundreds of millions in peace and plenty, without snatching the bread from the mouth of any one else? Is there no power displayed in bringing up and guiding the destinies of countless millions of human beings, through hundreds of centuries, without the least violence to others?

The mythologies of all ancient races supply us with fables of heroes whose life was concentrated in a certain small portion of their bodies; and until that was touched, they remained invulnerable. It seems as if each nation also has such a peculiar centre of life, and so long as that remains untouched, no amount of misery and misfortune can destroy it.

In religion lies the vitality of India, and so long as the Hindu race do not forget the great inheritance of their forefathers, there is no power on earth to destroy them.

Nowadays everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past is the cause of all India's woes. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the opposite is true. So long as they forgot the past, the Hindu nation remained in a state of stupor; and as soon as they have begun to look into their past, there is on every side a fresh manifestation of life. It is out of this past that the future has to be moulded, this past will become the future.

The more, therefore, the Hindus study the past, the more glorious will be their future, and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of every one is a great benefactor to his nation. The degeneration of India came not because the laws and customs of the ancients were bad, but because they were not allowed to be carried to their legitimate conclusions.

Every critical student knows that the social laws of India have always been subject to great periodic changes. At their inception, these laws were the embodiment of a gigantic plan, which was to unfold itself slowly through time. The great seers of ancient India saw so far ahead of their time that the world has to wait centuries yet to appreciate their wisdom, and it is this very inability, on the part of their own descendants, to appreciate the full scope of this wonderful plan that is the one and only cause of the degeneration of India.

Ancient India had for centuries been the battlefield for the ambitious projects of two of her foremost classes—the Brâhmanas and the Kshatriyas.

On the one hand, the priesthood stood between the lawless social tyranny of the princes over the masses, whom the Kshatriyas declared to be their legal food. On the other hand the Kshatriya power was the one potent force which struggled with any success against the spiritual tyranny of the priesthood and the ever-increasing chain of ceremonials which they were forging to bind down the people with.

The tug of war began in the earliest periods of the history of our race, and throughout the Shrutis it can be distinctly traced. A momentary lull came when Shri Krishna, leading the faction of Kshatriya power and of Jnâna, showed the way to reconciliation. The result was the teachings of the Gita—the essence of philosophy, of liberality, of religion. Yet the causes were there, and the effect must follow.

The ambition of these two classes to be the masters of the poor and ignorant was there, and the strife once more became fierce. The meagre literature that has come down to us from that period brings to us but faint echoes of that mighty past strife, but at last it broke out as a victory for the Kshatriyas, a victory for Jnana, for liberty—and ceremonial had to go down, much of it for ever. This upheaval was what is known as the Buddhistic reformation. On the religious side, it represented freedom from ceremonial; on the political side, overthrow of the priesthood by the Kshatriyas.

It is a significant fact that the two greatest men ancient India produced were both Kshatriyas—Krishna and Buddha; and still more significant is the fact that both of these God-men threw open the door of knowledge to every one, irrespective of birth or sex.

In spite of its wonderful moral strength, Buddhism was extremely iconoclastic; and much of its force being spent in merely negative attempts, it had to die out in the land of its birth, and what remained of it became full of superstitions and ceremonials, a hundred times cruder than those it was intended to suppress. Although it partially succeeded in putting down the animal sacrifices of the Vedas, it filled the land with temples, images, symbols, and bones of saints.

Above all, in the medley of Aryans, Mongols, and aborigines which it created, it unconsciously led the way to some of the hideous Vâmâchâras. This was especially the reason why this travesty of the teaching of the great Master had to be driven out of India by Shri Shankara and his band of Sannyâsins.

Thus, even the current of life, set in motion by the greatest soul that ever wore a human form, the Bhagavân Buddha himself, became a miasmatic pool, and India had to wait for centuries until Shankara arose, followed in quick succession by Râmânuja and Madhva.

By this time, an entirely new chapter had opened in the history of India. The ancient Kshatriyas and the Brahmanas had disappeared. The land between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas, the home of the Âryas, the land which gave birth to Krishna and Buddha, the cradle of great Râjarshis and Brahmarshis became silent, and from the very further end of the Indian Peninsula, from races alien in speech and form, from families claiming descent from the ancient Brahmanas came the reaction against the corrupted Buddhism.

What had become of the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas of Âryâvarta? They had entirely disappeared, except here and there a few mongrel clans claiming to be Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, and in spite of their inflated, self-laudatory assertions, that the whole world ought to learn from एतद्देशप्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्रजन्मनः (from the Brahmana born in this land), they had to sit in sackcloth and ashes, in all humility to learn at the feet of the Southerners. The result was the bringing back of the Vedas to India—a revival of Vedânta, such as India never before had seen; even the householders began to study the Âranyakas.

In the Buddhistic movement, the Kshatriyas were the real leaders, and whole masses of them became Buddhists. In the zeal of reform and conversion, the popular dialects had been almost exclusively cultivated, to the neglect of Sanskrit, and the larger portion of Kshatriyas had become disjointed from the Vedic literature and Sanskrit learning. Thus this wave of reform, which came from the South, benefited to a certain extent the priesthood, and the priests only. For the rest of India's millions, it forged more chains than they had ever known before.

The Kshatriyas have always been the backbone of India, so also they had been the supporters of science and liberty, and their voices had rung out again and again to clear the land from superstitions; and throughout the history of India they ever formed the invulnerable barrier to aggressive priestly tyranny.

When the greater part of their number sank into ignorance, and another portion mixed their blood with savages from Central Asia and lent their swords to establish the rules of priests in India, her cup became full to the brim, and down sank the land of Bharata, not to rise again, until the Kshatriya rouses himself and making himself free, strikes the chains from the feet of the rest. Priestcraft is the bane of India. Can man degrade his brother and himself escape degradation?

Know, Rajaji, the greatest of all truths, discovered by your ancestors, is that the universe is one. Can one injure any one without injuring himself? The mass of Brahmana and Kshatriya tyranny has recoiled upon their own heads with compound interest; and a thousand years of slavery and degradation is what the inexorable law of Karma is visiting upon them.

This is what one of your ancestors said: "Even in this life, they have conquered relativity whose mind is fixed on sameness" (Gita)—one who is believed to be God incarnate. We all believe it. Are his words then vain and without meaning? If not, and we know they are not, any attempt against this perfect equality of all creation, irrespective of birth, sex, or even qualification, is a terrible mistake, and no one can be saved until he has attained to this idea of sameness.

Follow, therefore, noble Prince, the teachings of Vedanta, not as explained by this or that commentator, but as the Lord within you understands them. Above all, follow this great doctrine of sameness in all things, through all beings, seeing the same God in all.

This is the way to freedom; inequality, the way to bondage. No man and no nation can attempt to gain physical freedom without physical equality, nor mental freedom without mental equality.

Ignorance, inequality, and desire are the three causes of human misery, and each follows the other in inevitable union. Why should a man think himself above any other man, or even an animal? It is the same throughout:

त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी ।

—"Thou art the man, Thou the woman, Thou art the young man, Thou the young woman."

Many will say, "That is all right for the Sannyasins, but we are householders". No doubt, a householder having many other duties to perform, cannot as fully attain to this sameness; yet this should be also their ideal, for it is the ideal of all societies, of all mankind, all animals, and all nature, to attain to this sameness. But alas! they think inequality is the way to attain equality, as if they could come to right by doing wrong!

This is the bane of human nature, the curse upon mankind, the root of all misery—this inequality. This is the source of all bondage—physical, mental and spiritual.

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥

—"Since seeing the Lord equally existent everywhere, he injures not Self by self, and so goes to the Highest Goal." This one saying contains, in a few words, the universal way to salvation.

You, Rajputs, have been the glories of ancient India. With your degradation came national decay, and India can only be raised if the descendants of the Kshatriyas co-operate with the descendants of the Brahmanas, not to share the spoils of pelf and power, but to help the weak, to enlighten the ignorant, and to restore the lost glory of the holy land of their forefathers.

And who can say but that the time is propitious? Once more the wheel is turning up, once more vibrations have been set in motion from India, which are destined at no distant day to reach the farthest limits of the earth. One voice has spoken, whose echoes are rolling on and gathering strength every day, a voice even mightier than those which have preceded it, for it is the summation of them all. Once more the voice that spoke to the sages on the banks of the Sarasvati, the voice whose echoes reverberated from peak to peak of the "Father of Mountains", and descended upon the plains through Krishna, Buddha, and Chaitanya in all-carrying floods, has spoken again. Once more the doors have opened. Enter ye into the realms of light, the gates have been opened wide once more.

And you, my beloved Prince—you the scion of a race who are the living pillars upon which rests the religion eternal, its sworn defenders and helpers, the descendants of Râma and Krishna—will you remain outside? I know, this cannot be. Yours, I am sure, will be the first hand that will be stretched forth to help religion once more. And when I think of you, Raja Ajit Singh, one in whom the well-known scientific attainments of your house have been joined to a purity of character of which a saint ought to be proud, to an unbounded love for humanity, I cannot help believing in the glorious renaissance of the religion eternal when such hands are willing to rebuild it again.

May the blessings of Ramakrishna be on you and yours for ever and ever, and that you may live long for the good of many and for the spread of truth is the constant prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.

95

54, WEST 33RD STREET, NEW YORK,
22nd June, 1895.

DEAR SISTER,[1]

The letters from India and the parcel of books reached me safe. I am so happy to know of Mr. Sam's arrival. I am sure he is "bewaring of the vidders" nicely. I met a friend of Mr. Sam's one day on the street. He is an Englishman with a name ending in "ni". He was very nice. He said he was living in the same house with Sam somewhere in Ohio.

I am going on pretty nearly in the same old fashion. Talking when I can and silent when forced to be. I do not know whether I will go to Greenacre this summer. I saw Miss Farmer the other day. She was in a hurry to go away, so I had but very little talk with her. She is a noble, noble lady.

How are you going on with your Christian Science lessons? I hope you will go to Greenacre. There you will find quite a number of them and also the Spiritualists, table turnings, palmists, astrologers, etc., etc. You will get all the "cures" and all the "isms" presided over by Miss Farmer.

Landsberg has gone away to live in some other place, so I am left alone. I am living mostly on nuts and fruits and milk, and find it very nice and healthy too. I hope to lose about 30 to 40 lb. this summer. That will be all right for my size. I am afraid I have forgotten all about Mrs. Adam's lesson in walking. I will have to renew them when she comes again to N. Y.

Gandhi has gone to England *en route* to India from Boston, I suppose. I would like to know about his "chaperon" Mrs. Howard and her present bereaved state. I am very glad to hear that the rugs did not go down to the bottom of the Atlantic and are at last coming.

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[1] Miss Mary Hale.

This year I could hardly keep my head up, and I did not go about lecturing. The three great commentaries on the Vedanta philosophy belonging to the three great sects of dualists, qualified dualists, and monists are being sent to me from India. Hope they will arrive safe. Then I will have an intellectual feast indeed. I intend to write a book this summer on the Vedanta philosophy. This world will always be a mixture of good and evil, of happiness and misery; this wheel will ever go up and come down; dissolution and resolution is the inevitable law. Blessed are those who struggle to go beyond. Well, I am glad all the babies are doing well but sorry there was no "catch" even this winter, and every winter the chances are dwindling down. Here near my lodgings is the Waldorf-Hotel, the rendezvous of lots of titled but penniless Europeans on show for "Yankee" heiresses to buy. You may have any selection here, the stock is so full and varied. There is the man who talks no English; there are others who lisp a few words which no one can understand; and others are there who talk nice English, but their chance is not so great as that of the dumb ones—the girls do not think them enough foreign who talk plain English fluently.

I read somewhere in a funny book that an American vessel was being foundered in the sea; the men were desperate and as a last solace wanted some religious service being done. There was "Uncle Josh" on board who was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. They all began to entreat, "Do something religious, Uncle Josh! We are all going to die". Uncle Joseph took his hat in his hand and took up a collection on the spot!

That is all of religion he knew. And that is more or less characteristic of the majority of such people. Collections are about all the religion they know or will ever know. Lord bless them. Good-bye for the present. I am going to eat something. I feel very hungry.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

96

C/o Miss Dutcher,
Thousand Island Park, N. Y.,
26th June, 1895.

Dear Sister,[1]

Many thanks for the Indian mail. It brought a good deal of good news. You are enjoying by this time, I hope, the articles by Prof. Max Müller on the "Immortality of the Soul" which I sent to Mother Church. The old man has taken in Vedanta, bones and all, and has boldly come out. I am so glad to know the arrival of the rugs. Was there any duty to pay? If so, I will pay that, I insist on it. There will come another big packet from the Raja of Khetri containing some shawls and brocades and nick-nacks. I want to present them to different friends. But they are not going to arrive before some months, I am sure.

I am asked again and again, as you will find in the letters from India, to go over. They are getting desperate. Now if I go to Europe, I will go as the guest of Mr. Francis Leggett of N. Y. He will travel all over Germany, England, France, and Switzerland for six weeks. From there I shall go to India, or I may return to America. I have a seed planted here and wish it to grow. This winter's work in N. Y. was splendid, and it may die if I suddenly go over to India ; so I am not sure about going to India soon.

Nothing noticeable has happened during this visit to the Thousand Islands. The scenery is very beautiful and I have some of my friends here with me to talk about God and soul *ad libitum*, I am eating fruits and drinking milk and so forth, and studying huge Sanskrit books on Vedanta which they have kindly sent me from India.

If I come to Chicago, I cannot come at least within six weeks or more. Baby needn't alter any of her plans for me. I will see you all somehow or other before I go.

You fussed so much over my reply to Madras, but it has produced a tremendous effect there. A late speech by the President of the Madras Christian College, Mr. Miller, embodies a large amount of my ideas and declares that the West is in need of Hindu ideas of God and man and calls upon the young men to go and preach to the West. This has created quite a furore of course amongst the Missions. What you allude to being published in the *Arena* I did not see a bit of it. The women did not make any fuss over me at all in New York. Your friend must have drawn on his imagination. They were not of the "bossing" type at all. I hope Father Pope will go to Europe and Mother Church too. Travelling is the best thing in life. I am afraid I shall die if made to stick to one place for a long time. Nothing like a nomadic life.

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[1] Miss Mary Hale.

The more the shades around deepen, the more the ends approach, and the more one understands the true meaning of life, that it is a dream; and we begin to understand the failure of everyone to grasp it, for they only attempted to get meaning out of the meaningless. To get reality out of a dream is boyish enthusiasm. "Everything is evanescent, everything is changeful"—knowing this, the sage gives up both pleasure and pain and becomes a witness of this panorama—(the universe)—without attaching himself to anything.

"They indeed have conquered Heaven even in this life whose mind has become fixed in *sameness.*"

"God is pure and same to all, therefore they are said to be *in God*"—Gita. Desire, ignorance, and inequality—this is the trinity of bondage.

Denial of the will to live, knowledge, and same-sightedness is the trinity of liberation.

Freedom is the goal of the universe.

"Nor love nor hate, nor pleasure nor pain, nor death nor life, nor religion nor irreligion: not this, not this, not this."

Yours ever,
VIVEKANANDA.

97

C/o Miss Dutcher,
Thousand Island Park, N. Y.

Dear Sister,[1]

Many thanks for the Indian Mail. I cannot express in words my gratitude to you. As you have already read in Max Müller's article on Immortality I sent Mother Church, that he thinks that those we love in this life we must have loved in the past, so it seems I must have belonged to the Holy Family in some past life. I am expecting some books from India. I hope they have arrived. If so will you kindly send them over here? If any postage is due, I shall send it as soon as I get intimation. You did not write about the duty on the rugs; there will be another big packet from Khetri containing carpets and shawls and some brocades and other nick-nacks. I have written them to get the duty paid there, if it is possible, through the American Consul in Bombay. If not, I shall have to pay it here. I do not think they will arrive for some months yet. I am anxious about the books. Kindly send them as soon as they arrive.

My love to Mother and Father Pope and all the sisters. I am enjoying this place immensely. Very little eating and good deal of thinking and talking and study. A wonderful calmness is coming over my soul. Every day I feel I have no duty to do; I am always in eternal rest and peace. It is He that works. We are only the instruments. Blessed be His name! The threefold bondage of lust and gold and fame is as it were fallen from me for the time being, and once more, even here, I feel what sometimes I felt in India, "From me all difference has fallen, all right or wrong, all delusion and ignorance have vanished, I am walking in the path beyond the qualities." What law I obey, what disobey? From that height the universe looks like a mud-puddle. Hari Om Tat Sat. He exists: nothing else does. I in Thee and Thou in me. Be Thou Lord my eternal refuge! Peace, Peace, Peace! Ever with love and blessings,

Your brother,
Vivekananda.

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[1] Miss Mary Hale.

98

U.S.A.,
1st July, 1895.

Dear Alasinga,

I received your missionary book and the Ramnad photos. I have written to the Raja as well as to the Dewan of Mysore. The missionary pamphlet must have reached here long ago, as the Ramabai circle controversy with Dr. Jane savoured of it, it seems. Now you need not be afraid of anything. There is one mis-statement in that pamphlet. I never went to a big hotel in this country and very few times to any other. At Baltimore the small hotels, being ignorant, would not take in a black man, thinking he was a Negro. So my host, Dr. Vrooman had to take me to a large one, because they knew the difference between a Negro and a foreigner. Let me tell you, Alasinga, that you have to defend yourselves. Why do you behave like babies? If anybody attacks your religion, why cannot you defend it? As for me, you need not be afraid, I have more friends than enemies here, and in this country one-third are Christians, and only a small number of the educated care about the missionaries. Again, the very fact of the missionaries being against anything makes the educated like it. They are less of a power here now, and are becoming less so every day. If their attacks pain you, why do you behave like a petulant child and refer to me? . . . Cowardice is no virtue.

Here I have already got a respectable following. Next year I will organize it on a working basis, and then the work will be carried on. And when I am off to India, I have friends who will back me here and help me in India too; so you need not fear. So long as you shriek at the missionary attempts, and jump without being able to do anything, I laugh at you; you are little dollies, that is what you are. . . . What can Swami do for old babies! !

I know, my son, I shall have to come and manufacture men out of you. I know that India is only inhabited by women and eunuchs. So do not fret. I will have to get means to work there. I do not put myself in the hands of imbeciles. You need not worry, do what little you can. I have to work alone from top to bottom. . . . "This Âtman (Self) is not to be reached by cowards." You need not be afraid for me. The Lord is with me, you defend yourselves only and show me you can do that; and I will be satisfied. Don't bother me any more with what any one says about me. I am not waiting to hear any fool's judgment of me. You babies, great results are attained only by great patience, great courage, and great attempts. . . . Kidi's mind is taking periodic somersaults, I am afraid. . . .

The brave alone do great things, not the cowards. Know once for all, your faithless ones, that I am in the hands of the Lord. So long as I am pure and His servant, not a hair of my head will be touched. . . . Do something for the nation, then they will help you, then the nation will be with you. Be brave, be brave! Man dies but once. My disciples must not be cowards.

Ever yours with love,
VIVEKANANDA.

99

U.S.A.,
9th July, 1895.

. . . About my coming to India, the matter stands thus. I am, as your Highness[1] well know, a man of dogged perseverance. I have planted a seed in this country; it is already a plant, and I expect it to be a tree very soon. I have got a few hundred followers. I shall make several Sannyâsins, and then I go to India, leaving the work to them. The more the Christian priests oppose me, the more I am determined to leave a permanent mark on their country. . . . I have already some friends in London. I am going there by the end of August. . . . This winter anyway has to be spent partly in London and partly in New York, and then I shall be free to go to India.

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[1] The Maharaja of Khetri.

There will be enough men to carry on the work here after this winter, if the Lord is kind. Each work has to pass through these stages—ridicule, opposition, and then acceptance. Each man who thinks ahead of his time is sure to be misunderstood. So opposition and persecution are welcome, only I have to be steady and pure and must have immense faith in God, and all these will vanish. . . .

VIVEKANANDA.

100

U.S.A.,
August, 1895.

DEAR ALASINGA,

By the time this reaches you, dear Alasinga, I shall be in Paris. . . . I have done a good deal of work this year and hope to do a good deal more in the next. Don't bother about the missionaries. It is quite natural that they should cry. Who does not when his bread is dwindling away? The missionary funds have got a big gap the last two years, and it is on the increase. However, I wish the missionaries all success. So long as you have love for God and Guru, and faith in truth, nothing can hurt you, my son. But the loss of any of these is dangerous. You have remarked well; my ideas are going to work in the West better than in India. . . . I have done more for India than India ever did for me. . . . I believe in truth, the Lord sends me workers by the scores wherever I go—and they are not like the . . . disciples either—they are ready to give up their lives for their Guru. Truth is my God, the universe my country. I do not believe in duty. Duty is the curse of the Samsâri (householder), not for the Sannyâsin. Duty is a humbug. I am free, my bonds are cut; what care I where this body goes or does not go? You have helped me well right along. The Lord will reward you. I sought praise neither from India nor from America, nor do I seek such bubbles. I have a truth to teach, I, the child of God. And He that gave me the truth will send me fellow-workers from the earth's bravest and best. You Hindus will see in a few years what the Lord does in the West. You are like the Jews of old—dogs in the manger, who neither eat nor allow others to eat. You have no religion, your God is the kitchen, your Bible the cooking-pots. . . . You are a few brave lads. . . . Hold on, boys, no cowards among my children. . . . Are great things ever done smoothly? Time, patience, and indomitable will must show. I could have told you many things that would have made your heart leap, but I will not. I want iron wills and hearts that do not know how to quake. Hold on. The Lord bless you.

Ever yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

101

THOUSAND ISLAND PARK,
August, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

. . . Now here is another letter from Mr. Sturdy. I send it over to you. See how things are being prepared ahead. Don't you think this coupled with Mr. Leggett's invitation as a divine call? I think so and am following it. I am going by the end of August with Mr. Leggett to Paris, and then I go to London.

What little can be done for my brethren and my work is all the help I want from you now. I have done my duty by my people fairly well. Now for the world that gave me this body—the country that gave me the ideas, the humanity which allows me to be one of them!

The older I grow, the more I see behind the idea of the Hindus that *man* is the greatest of all beings. So say the Mohammedans too. The angels were asked by Allah to bow down to Adam. Iblis did not, and therefore he became Satan. This earth is higher than all heavens; this is the greatest school in the universe; and the Mars or Jupiter people cannot be higher than we, because they cannot communicate with us.

The only so-called higher beings are the departed, and these are nothing but men who have taken another body. This is finer, it is true, but still a *man-body,* with hands and feet, and so on. And they live on this earth in another Âkâsa, without being absolutely invisible. They also think, and have consciousness and everything else like us. So they also are men, so are the Devas, the angels. But man alone becomes *God*; and they all have to become men again in order to become God. . . .

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

102

19 WEST 38TH STREET,
NEW YORK,
9th August, 1895.

DEAR FRIEND,[1]

. . . It is only just that I should try to give you a little of my views. I fully believe that there are periodic ferments of religion in human society, and that such a period is now sweeping over the educated world. While each ferment, moreover, appears broken into various little bubbles, these are all eventually similar, showing the cause or causes behind them to be the same. That religious ferment which at present is everyday gaining a greater hold over thinking men, has this characteristic, that all the little thought-whirlpools into which it has broken itself declare one single aim—a vision and a search after the Unity of Being. On planes physical, ethical, and spiritual, an ever-broadening generalization—leading up to a concept of Unity Eternal—is in the air; and this being so, all the movements of the time may be taken to represent, knowingly or unknowingly, the noblest philosophy of the unity man ever had—the Advaita Vedanta.

Again, it has always been observed that as a result of the struggles of the various fragments of thought in a given epoch, one bubble survives. The rest only arise to melt into it and form a single great wave, which sweeps over society with irresistible force.

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[1] E. T. Sturdy.

In India, America, and England (the countries I happen to know about) hundreds of these are struggling at the present moment. In India, dualistic formulae are already on the wane, the Advaita alone holds the field in force. In America, many movements are struggling for the mastery. All these represent Advaita thought more or less, and that series which is spreading most rapidly, approaches nearer to it than any of the others. Now if anything was ever clear to me, it is that one of these must survive, swallowing up all the rest, to be the power of the future. Which is it to be?

Referring to history, we see that only that fragment which is fit will survive, and what makes fit to survive but *character*? Advaita will be the future religion of thinking humanity. No doubt of that. And of all the sects, they alone shall gain the day who are able to show most character in their lives—no matter how far they may be.

Let me tell you a little personal experience. When my Master left the body, we were a dozen penniless and unknown young men. Against us were a hundred powerful organizations, struggling hard to nip us in the bud. But Ramakrishna had given us one great gift, the desire, and the lifelong struggle not to talk alone, but to *live the life.* And today all India knows and reverences the Master, and the truths he taught are spreading like wild fire. Ten years ago I could not get a hundred persons together to celebrate his birthday anniversary. Last year there were fifty thousand.

Neither numbers, nor powers, nor wealth, nor learning, nor eloquence, nor anything else will prevail, but *purity, living the life,* in one word, *anubhuti,* realization. Let there be a dozen such lion-souls in each country, lions who have broken their own bonds, who have touched the Infinite, whose whole soul is gone to Brahman, who care neither for wealth, nor power, nor fame, and these will be *enough* to shake the world.

Here lies the secret. Says Patanjali, the father of Yoga, "When a man rejects all the superhuman powers, then he attains to the cloud of virtue" He sees God. He becomes God and helps others to become the same. This is all

I have to preach. Doctrines have been expounded enough. There are books by the million. Oh for an ounce of practice!

As to societies and organizations, these will come of themselves. Can there be jealousy where there is nothing to be jealous of? The names of those who will wish to injure us will be legion. But is not that the surest sign of our having the truth? The more I have been opposed, the more my energy has always found expression. I have been driven and worshipped by princes. I have been slandered by priests and laymen alike, But what of it? Bless them all! They are my very Self, and have they not helped me by acting as a spring-board from which my energy could take higher and higher flights?

. . . I have discovered one great secret—I have nothing to fear from *talkers* of religion. And the great ones who realize —they become enemies to none! Let talkers talk! They know no better! Let them have their fill of name and fame and money and woman. Hold we on to realization, to being Brahman, to becoming Brahman. Let us hold on to truth unto death, and from life to life! Let us not pay the least attention to what others say, and if after a lifetime's effort, one soul, only one, can break the fetters of the world and be free, *we have done our work*. Hari Om!

. . . One word more. Doubtless I do love India. But every day my sight grows clear. What is India, or England, or America to us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN. He who pours water at the root, does he not water the whole tree? There is but one basis of well-being, social, political, or spiritual—to know that I and my brother are *one*. This is true for all countries and all people And Westerners, let me say, will realize it more quickly than Orientals, who have almost exhausted themselves in formulating the idea and producing a few cases of individual realization.

Let us work without desire for name or fame or rule over the others. Let us be free from **the** triple bonds of lust, greed of gain, and anger. And the truth is with us!

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

103

1895.

DEAR SHASHI,

. . . I am quite in agreement with what Sarada is doing, but it is not necessary to preach that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was an Incarnation, and things of that sort. He came to do good to the world, not to trumpet his own name—you must always remember this. Disciples pay their whole attention to the preservation of their master's name, and throw overboard his teachings; and sectarianism etc., are the result. Alasinga writes of Charu; but I do not recollect him. Write all about him and convey him my thanks. Write in detail about all; I have no time to spare for idle gossip. . . . Try to give up ceremonials. They are not meant for Sannyasins; and one must work only so long as one does not attain to Illumination, . . . I have nothing to do with sectarianism, or party-forming and playing the frog-in-the-well, whatever else I may do. . . . It is impossible to preach the catholic ideas of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and form sects at the same time. . . . Only one kind of work I understand, and that is doing good to others; all else is doing evil. I therefore postrate myself before the Lord Buddha. . . . I am a Vedantist! Sachchidananda—Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute — is my God. I scarcely find any other God than the majestic form of my own Self. By the word "Incarnation" are meant those who have attained that Brahmanhood, in other words, the Jivanmuktas —those who have realized this freedom in this very life. I do not find any speciality in Incarnations: all beings from Brahmâ down to a clump of grass will attain to liberation-in-life in course of time, and our duty lies in helping all to reach that state. This help is called religion; the rest is irreligion. This help is work; the rest is evil-doing—I see nothing else. Other kinds of work, for example, the Vaidika or the Tântrika, may produce results; but resorting to them is simply waste of life, for that purity which is the goal of work is realizable only through doing good to others. Through works such as sacrifices etc., one may get enjoyments, but it is impossible to have the purity of soul. . . .

Everything exists already in the Self of all beings. He who asserts he is free, shall be free. He who says he is bound, bound he shall remain. To me, the thought of oneself as low and humble is a sin and ignorance. नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः —"This Atman is not to be attained by one who is weak." अस्ति ब्रह्म वदसि चेदस्ति नास्ति ब्रह्म वदसि चेन्नास्त्येव भविष्यति—"If you say Brahman *is*, existence will be the result; if you say Brahman is *not*, non-existent, It shall verily become." He who always thinks of himself as weak will never become strong, but he who knows himself to be a lion, निर्गच्छति जगज्जालात् पिञ्जरादिव केशरी—"rushes out from the world's meshes, as a lion from its cage". Another point, it was no new truth that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa came to preach, though his advent brought the old truths to light. In other words, he was the embodiment of all the past religious thought of India. His life alone made me understand what the Shâstras really meant, and the whole plan and scope of the old Shastras.

Missionaries and others could not do much against me in this country. Through the Lord's grace the people here like me greatly and are not to be tricked by the opinions of any particular class. They appreciate my ideas in a manner my own countrymen cannot do, and are not selfish. I mean, when it comes to practical work, they will give up jealousy and all those ideas of self-sufficiency. Then all of them agree and act under the direction of a capable man. That is what makes them so great. But then they are a nation of Mammon-worshippers. Money come before everything. People of our country are very liberal in pecuniary matters, but not so much these people. Every home has a miser. It is almost a religion here. But they fall into the clutches of the priests when they do something bad, and then buy their passage to heaven with money. These things are the same in every country—priestcraft. I can say nothing as to whether I shall go back to India and when. There also I shall have to lead a wandering life as I do here; but here thousands of people listen to and understand my lectures, and these thousands are benefited. But can you say the same thing about India? . . . I am perfectly at one with what Sarada is doing. A thousand thanks to him. . . . In Madras and Bombay I have lots of men who are after my heart. They are learned and understand everything. Moreover they are kind-hearted and can therefore appreciate the philanthropic spirit. . . . I have printed neither books nor anything of the kind. I simply go on lecturing tours. . . . When I take a retrospective view of my past life, I feel no remorse. From country to country I have travelled teaching something, however little, to people, and in exchange for that have partaken of their slices of bread. If I had found I had done no work, but simply supported myself by imposing upon people, I would have committed suicide today. Why do those, who think themselves unfit to teach their fellow-beings, wear the teacher's garb and earn their bread by cheating them? Is not that a deadly sin? . . .

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

104*

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna !

1895.

DEAR RAKHAL,

I have now got lots of newspapers etc., and you need not send any more. Let the movement now confine itself to India. . . .

It isn't much use getting up a sensation every day. But avail yourselves of this stir that is rife all over the country, and scatter yourselves in all quarters. In other words, try to start branches at different places. Let it not be an empty sound merely. You must join the Madrasis and start associations etc., at different places. What about the magazine which I heard was going to be started? Why are you nervous about conducting it? . . . Come. Do something heroic. Brother, what if you do not attain Mukti, what if you suffer damnation a few times? Is the saying untrue?—

मनसि वचसि काये पुण्यपीयूषपूर्णाः
त्रिभुवनमुपकारश्रेणिभिः प्रीणयन्तः ।
परगुणपरमाणून् पर्वतीकृत्य नित्यं
निजहृदि विकसन्तः सन्ति सन्तः कियन्तः ॥

—"There are some saints who full of holiness in thought, word, and deed,. please the whole world by their numerous beneficent acts, and who develop their own hearts by magnifying an atom of virtue in others as if it were as great as a mountain." (Bhartrihari, *Nitisataka*).

What if you don't get Mukti? What childish prattle? Lord! They say even the venom of a snake loses its power by firmly denying it. Isn't it true? What queer humility is this to say, "I know nothing!", "I am nothing!" This is pseudo-renunciation and mock-modesty, I tell you. Off with such a self-debasing spirit! "If I do not know, who on earth does?" What have you been doing so long, if you now plead ignorance? These are the words of an atheist—the humility of a vagabond wretch. We can do everything, and will do everything! He who is fortunate enough will heroically join us, letting the worthless mew like cats from their corner. A saint writes, "Well, you have had enough of blazoning. Now come back home." I would have called him a man if he could build a house and call me. Ten years' experience of such things has made me wiser. I am no more to be duped by words. Let him who has courage in his mind and love in his heart come with me, I want none else. Through Mother's grace, single-handed I am worth a hundred thousand now and will be worth two millions. . . . There is no certainty about my going back to India. I shall have to lead a wandering life there also, as I am doing here. But here one lives in the company of scholars, and there one must live among fools—there is this difference as of the poles. People of this country organize and work, while *our* undertakings all come to dust clashing against laziness —miscalled "renunciation"—and jealousy etc.—writes me big letters now and then, half of which I cannot decipher, which is a blessing to me. For a great part of the news is of the following description—that in such and such a place such and such a man was speaking ill of me, and that he, being unable to bear the same, had a quarrel with him, and so forth. Many thanks for his kind defence of me. But what seriously hinders me from listening to what particular people may be saying about me is— स्वल्पश्च कालो बहवश्च विघ्नाः —"Time is short, but the obstacles are many." . . .

An organized society is wanted. Let Shashi look to the household management, Sanyal take charge of money matters and marketing, and Sharat act as secretary, that is, carry on correspondence etc. Make a permanent centre—it is no use making random efforts as you are doing now. Do you see my point? I have quite a heap of newspapers, now I want you to do something. If you can build a Math, I shall say you are heroes; otherwise you are nothing. Consult the Madras people when you work. They have a great capacity for work. Celebrate this year's Shri Ramakrishna festival with such éclat as to make it a record. The less the feeding propaganda is, the better. It is enough if you distribute Prasâda in earthen cups to the devotees standing in rows. . . .

I am going to write a very short sketch of Shri Ramakrishna's life in English, which I shall send you. Have it printed and translated into Bengali and sell it at the festival—people do not read books that are distributed free. Fix some nominal price. Have the festival done with great pomp. . . .

You must have an all-sided intellect to do efficient work. In any towns or villages you may visit, start an association wherever you find a number of people revering Shri Ramakrishna. Have you travelled through so many villages all for nothing? We must slowly absorb the Hari-Sabhâs and such other associations. Well, I cannot tell you all—if I could but get another demon like me! The Lord will supply me everything in time. . . . If one has got power, one must manifest it in action. . . . Off with your ideas of Mukti and Bhakti! There is only one way in the world परोपकाराय हि सतां जीवितं, परार्थें प्राज्ञ उत्सृजेत्—"The good live for others alone, the wise man should sacrifice himself for others". I can secure my own good only by doing your good. There is no other way, none whatsoever. . . . You are God, I am God, and man is God. It is this God manifested through humanity who is doing everything in this world. Is there a different God sitting high up somewhere? To work, therefore!

Bimala has sent me a book written by Shashi (Sanyal). . . . From a perusal of that work Bimala has come to know that all the people of this world are impure and that they are by their very nature debarred from having a jot of religion; that only the handful of Brahmins that are in India have the sole right to it, and among these again, Shashi (Sanyal) and

Bimala are the sun and moon, so to speak. Bravo! What a powerful religion indeed! In Bengal specially, that sort of religion is very easy to practise. There is no easier way than that. The whole truth about austerities and spiritual exercises is, in a nutshell, that I am pure and all the rest are impure! A beastly, demoniac, hellish religion this! If the American people are unfit for religion, if it is improper to preach religion here, why then ask their help? . . . What can remedy such a disease? Well, tell Shashi (Sanyal) to go to Malabar. The Raja there has taken his subjects' land and offered it at the feet of Brahmins. There are big monasteries in every village, where sumptuous dinners are given, supplemented by presents in cash. . . . There is no harm in touching the non-Brahmin classes when it serves one's purpose, and when you have done with it, you bathe, for the non-Brahmins are as a class unholy and must never be touched on other occasions! Monks and Sannyasins and Brahmins of a certain type have thrown the country into ruin. Intent all the while on theft and wickedness, these pose as preachers of religion! They will take gifts from the people and at the same time cry, "Don't touch me!" And what great things they have been doing!—"If a potato happens to touch a brinjal, how long will the universe last before it is deluged?" "If they do not apply earth a dozen times to clean their hands, will fourteen generations of ancestors go to hell, or twenty-four?"—For intricate problems like these they have been finding out scientific explanations for the last two thousand years—while one-fourth of the people are starving. A girl of eight is married to a man of thirty, and the parents are jubilant over it. And if anyone protests against it, the plea is put forward, "Our religion is being overturned". What sort of religion have they who want to see their girls becoming mothers before they attain puberty even, and offer scientific explanations for it? Many, again, lay the blame at the door of the Mohammedans. They are to blame, indeed! Just read the *Grihya-Sutras* through and see what is given as the marriageable age of a girl. . . . There it is expressly stated that a girl must be married very young. The entire *Grihya-Sutras* enjoin this. And in the Vedic Ashvamedha sacrifice worse things would be done. All the *Brâhmanas* mention them, and all the commentators admit them to be true. How can you deny them?

What I mean by mentioning all this is that there were many good things in the ancient times, but there were bad things too. The good things are to be retained, but the India that is to be, the future India, must be much greater than ancient India. From the day Shri Ramakrishna was born dates the growth of modern India and of the Golden Age. And you are the agents to bring about this Golden Age. To work, with this conviction at heart! Hence, when you call Shri Ramakrishna an Incarnation, and in the same breath plead your ignorance unhesitatingly I say, "You are false to the backbone!" If Ramakrishna Paramahamsa be true, you also are true. But you must show it. . . . In you all there is tremendous power. The atheist has nothing but rubbish in him. Those who are believers are heroes. They will manifest tremendous power. The world will be swept before them. "Sympathy and help to the poor"; "Man is God, he is Nârâyana"; "In Atman there is no distinction of male or female, of Brahmin or Kshatriya, and the like"; "All is Narayana from the Creator down to a clump of grass". The worm is less manifested, the Creator more manifested. Every action that helps a being manifest its divine nature more and more is *good,* every action that retards it is *evil.* The only way of getting our divine nature manifested is by helping others to do the same.

If there is inequality in nature, still there must be equal chance for all—or if greater for some and for some less—the weaker should be given more chance than the strong. In other words, a Brahmin is not so much in need of education as a Chandâla. If the son of a Brahmin needs one teacher, that of a Chandala needs ten. For, greater help must be given to him whom nature has not endowed with an acute intellect from birth. It is a madman who carries coals to Newcastle. The poor, the downtrodden, the ignorant, let these be your God.

A dreadful slough is in front of you—take care; many fall into it and die. The slough is this, that the present religion of the Hindus is not in the Vedas, nor in the Puranas, nor in Bhakti, nor in Mukti—religion has entered into the cooking-pot. The present religion of the Hindus is neither the path of knowledge, nor that of reason—it is "Don't-touchism". "Don't touch me!", "Don't touch me!"—that exhausts its description. See that you do not not lose your lives in this dire irreligion of "Don't-touchism". Must the teaching, आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु —"Looking upon all beings as your own self"—be confined to books alone? How will they grant salvation who cannot feed a hungry mouth with a crumb of bread? How will those who become impure at the mere breath of others purify others? Don't-touchism is a form of mental disease. Beware! All expansion is life, all contraction is death. All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love's sake, because it is the only law of life, just as you breathe to live. This is the secret of selfless love, selfless action, and the rest. . . . Try to help Shashi (Sanyal) if you can in any way. He is a very good and pious man, but of a narrow heart. It does not fall to the lot of all to feel for the misery of others. Good Lord! Of all Incarnations Shri Chaitanya was the greatest, but he was comparatively lacking in knowledge; in the Ramakrishna Incarnation there is knowledge, devotion, and love—infinite knowledge, infinite love, infinite work, infinite compassion for all beings. You have not yet been able to understand him. श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् —"Even hearing about Him, most people do not understand Him". What the whole Hindu race has thought in ages, he *lived* in one life. His life is the living commentary to the *Vedas* of all nations. People will come to know him by degrees. My old watchword—struggle, struggle up to light! Onward!

Yours in service,
VIVEKANANDA.

105

PARIS,
9th September, 1895.

DEAR ALASINGA,

. . . I am surprised you take so seriously the missionaries' nonsense. . . . If the people in India want me to keep strictly to my Hindu diet, please tell them to send me a cook and money enough to keep him. This silly *bossism* without a mite of real help makes me laugh. On the other hand, if the missionaries tell you that I have even broken the two great vows of the Sannyâsin—chastity and poverty—tell them that they are *big liars.* Please write to the missionary Hume asking him categorically to write you what misdemeanour he saw in me, or give you the names of his informants, and whether the information was *first-hand or not*; that will settle the question and expose the whole thing. . . .

As for me, mind you, I stand at nobody's dictation. I know my mission in life, and no chauvinism about me; I belong as much to India as to the world, no humbug about that, I have helped you all I could. You must now help yourselves. What country has any special claim on me? Am I any nation's slave? Don't talk any more silly nonsense, you faithless atheists.

I have worked hard and sent all the money I got to Calcutta and Madras, and then after doing all this stand their silly dictation! Are you not ashamed? What do I owe to them? Do I care a fig for their praise or fear their blame? I am a singular man, my son, not even you can understand me yet, Do your work; if you cannot, stop; but do not try to "boss" me with your nonsense. I *see* a greater Power than man, or God, or devil at my back. I require nobody's help. I have been all my life helping others. . . . They cannot raise a few rupees to help the work of the greatest man their country ever produced—Ramakrishna Paramahamsa; and they talk nonsense and want to dictate to the man for whom they did nothing, and who did everything he could for them! Such is the ungrateful world!

Do you mean to say I am born to live and die one of those caste-ridden, superstitious, merciless, hypocritical, atheistic *cowards* that you find only amongst the educated Hindus? I hate cowardice; I will have nothing to do with cowards or political nonsense. I do not believe in any politics. God and truth are the only politics in the world, everything else is trash.

I am going to London tomorrow. . . .

Yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

106*

1895.

MY DEAR——,[1]

The books that Sanyal sent have arrived. I forgot to mention this. Please inform him about it.

Let me write down something for you all:

1. Know partiality to be the chief cause of all evil. That is to say, if you show towards any one more love than towards somebody else, rest assured, you will be sowing the seeds of future troubles.

2. If anybody comes to you to speak ill of any of his brothers, refuse to listen to him *in toto*. It is a great sin to listen even. In that lies the germ of future troubles.

3. Moreover, bear with everyone's shortcomings. Forgive offences by the million. And if you love all unselfishly, all will by degrees come to love one another. As soon as they fully understand that the interests of one depend upon those of others, every one of them will give up jealousy. To do something conjointly is not in our very national character. Therefore you must try to inaugurate that spirit with the utmost care, and wait patiently. To tell you the truth, I do not find among you any distinction of great or small: every one has the capacity to manifest, in times of need, the highest energy. I see it. Look for instance how Shashi will remain

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[1] Brother-disciples at the Math.

always constant to his spot; his steadfastness is a great foundation rock. How successfully Kali and Jogen brought about the Town Hall meeting; it was indeed a momentous task! Niranjan has done much work in Ceylon and elsewhere. How extensively has Sarada travelled and sown seeds of gigantic future works! Whenever I think of the wonderful renunciation of Hari, about his steadiness of intellect and forbearance, I get a new access of strength! In Tulasi, Gupta, Baburam, Sharat, to mention a few, in every one of you there is tremendous energy. If you still entertain any doubt as to Shri Ramakrishna's being a jewel-expert, what then is the difference between you and a madman! Behold, hundreds of men and women of this country are beginning to worship our Lord as the greatest of all Avataras! Steady! Every great work is done slowly. . . .

He is at the helm, what fear! You are all of infinite strength—how long does it take you to keep off petty jealousy or egoistic ideas! The moment such propensity comes, resign yourselves to the Lord! Just make over your body and mind to His work, and all troubles will be at an end for ever.

There will not be room enough, I see, in the house where you are at present living. A commodious building is needed. That is to say, you need not huddle together in one room. If possible, not more than two should live in the same room. There should be a big hall, where the books may be kept.

Every morning there should be a little reading from the scriptures, which Kali and others may superintend by turns. In the evening there should be another class, with a little practice in meditation, and Sankirtanas etc. You may divide the work, and set apart one day for Yoga, a day for Bhakti, another for Jnâna, and so forth. It will be excellent if you fix a routine like this, so that outside people also may join in the evening classes. And every Sunday, from ten in the morning up till night, there should be a continuous succession of classes and Sankirtanas etc. That is for the public. If you take the trouble to continue this kind of routine-work for some time, it will gradually make itself easy and smooth. There should be no smoking in that hall, for which another place must be set apart. If you can take the trouble to bring about this state of things by degrees, I shall think a great advance is made.

What about a certain magazine that Haramohan was trying to publish? If you can manage to start one, it will indeed be nice.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

107*

1895.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

Just now I got your letter and was glad to go through it. No matter whether there is any work done in India or not, the real work lies here. I do not want anybody to come over now. On my return to India I shall train a few men, and after that there will be no danger for them in the West. Yes, it was of Gunanidhi that I wrote. Give my special love and blessings to Hari Singh and others. Never take part in quarrels and disputes. Who on earth possesses the power to put the Raja of Khetri down?—The Divine Mother is at his elbow! I have received Kali's letter too. It will be very good indeed if you can start a centre in Kashmir. Wherever you can, open a centre. . . . Now I have laid the foundations firm here and in England, and nobody has the power to shake them. New York is in a commotion this year. Next year will come the turn of London. Even big giants will give way, who counts your pigmies! Gird up your loins and set yourselves to work! We must throw the world into convulsions with our triumphal shouts. This is but the beginning, my boy. Do you think there are *men* in our country, it is a *Golgotha*! There is some chance if you can impart education to the masses. Is there a greater strength than that of knowledge? Can you give them education? Name me the country where rich men ever helped anybody! In all countries it is the middle classes that do all great works. How long will it take to raise the money? Where are the *men*? Are there any in our country? Our countrymen are boys, and we must treat them as such. . . . There are some few religious and philosophical books left—the remnants of the mansion that has been burnt down; take them with you, quick, and come over to this country. . . .

Never fear! The Divine Mother is helping me! This year such work is going to be turned out that you will be struck dumb to hear of it!

What fear! Whom to fear! Steel your hearts and set yourselves to work!

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Sarada is talking of bringing out a Bengali magazine. Help it with all your might. It is not a bad idea. You must not throw cold water on anybody's project. Give up criticism altogether. Help all as long as you find they are doing all right, and in cases where they seem to be going wrong, show them their mistakes gently. It is criticizing each other that is at the root of all mischief. That is the chief factor in breaking down organizations. . . .

108*

C/o E. T. STURDY, ESQ.,
HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM,
READING, ENGLAND,
1895.

DEAR SHASHI,[1]

. . . I am in receipt of Rakhal's letter today. I am sorry to hear that——has suffered from gravel. Most probably it was due to indigestion. Gopal's debts have been cleared; now ask him to join the monastic order. The worldly-wise instinct is most difficult to root out. . . . Let him come and work in the Math. One is apt to imbibe a lot of mischievous ideas by concerning oneself too long in worldly affairs. If he refuses to take the monastic vow, please tell him to clear out. I don't want amphibious type of men who will be half monks and half householders. . . . Haramohan has coined a *Lord* Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, I see. What does he mean? English Lord, or Duke? Tell Rakhal, let people say whatever they will—"Men (who wrongly criticize) are to be treated as worms!" as Shri Ramakrishna used to say. Let there be no disparity between what you profess and what you do, also eschew the very name of Jesuitism. Was I ever an orthodox, Paurânika Hindu, an adherent of social usages? I do not pose as one. You will not have to say things that will be *pleasant* to any section of people. You must not so much as notice what the—Bengalis say for or against us. . . . They could not do a penny-worth of service to him whose birth has sanctified their country where the primary laws of health and sanitation are trampled, and yet they would talk big! What matters it, my brother, what such men have got to say! . . . It is for you to go on doing your own work. Why look up to men for approbation, look up to God! I hope Sharat will be able to teach them the Gita and the Upanishads and their commentaries somehow, with the help of the dictionary.—Or is it an empty Vairâgya that you have? The days of such Vairagya are gone! It is not for everyone, my boy, to become Ramakrishna Paramahamsa! I hope Sharat has started by this time. Please send a copy of the *Panchadashi,* a copy of the Gita (with as many commentaries as possible), a copy each of the *Nârada* and *Shândilya Sutras* (published in Varanasi), a translation (good, not worthless) of the *Panchadashi*—if it is available—and the translation by Kalivara Vedântavâgisha of Shankara's Commentary. And if there be any translation, Bengali or English (by Shrish Basu of Allahabad), of Panini's Sutras, or the *Kâshikâ-Vritti,* or the *Phani-Bhâshya,* please send a copy of each. . . . Now, just tell your——s to send me a copy of the *Vâchaspatyam* Dictionary, and that will be a good test for those tall-talking people. In England, religious movements make very slow progress. These people here are either bigots or atheists. And the former again have only a bit of formal religion. They say, "Patriotism is our religion". That is all.

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[1] Swami Ramakrishnananda.

Send the books to America, C/o Miss Mary Phillips, 19 W. 38th Street, New York, U.S.A. That is my American address. By the end of November I shall go to America. So send my books etc., there. If Sharat has started immediately on your receipt of my letter, then only I may meet him, otherwise not. Business is business, no child's play. Mr. Sturdy will see to him and accommodate him. This time I have come to England just to probe a little. Next summer I shall try to make some stir. The winter after that, I shall go to India. . . . Correspond regularly with those who are interested in us, so as to keep up their interest. Try to open centres in places all over Bengal. . . . This much for the present. In my next I shall give you more details. Mr. Sturdy is a very nice gentleman, a staunch Vedantist, and understands a smattering of Sanskrit. It is with a good deal of labour that you can do a little bit of work in these countries; a sheer uphill task, with cold and rain into the bargain. Moreover, here you must support yourself and do your labour of love. Englishmen won't spend a penny on lectures or things of that sort. If they do come to listen to you, well, thank your stars—as is the case in our country. Besides, the common people here do not even know of me now. In addition to all this, they will give you a wide berth if you preach God and such things to them. They think this must be another clergyman! Well, you just patiently do one thing—set about collecting everything that books, beginning with the Rig-Veda down to the most insignificant of Puranas and Tantras, have got to say about creation and annihilation of the universe, about race, heaven, and hell, the soul, consciousness, and intellect, etc., the sense-organs, Mukti, transmigration, and such-like things. No child's play would do, I want real scholarly work. The most important thing is to collect the materials. My love to you all.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

109*

C/o E. T. Sturdy,
High View, Caversham, Reading,
4th October, 1895.

My dear Rakhal,

You know that I am now in England. I shall stay here for about a month and go back to America. Next summer I shall again come to England. At present there is not much prospect in England, but the Lord is omnipotent. Let us wait and see. . . .

It is impossible for——to come now. The thing is, the money belongs to Mr. Sturdy, and we must have the kind of man he likes. Mr. Sturdy has taken initiation from me, and is a very enterprising and good man.

In the first place, we want a man who has a thorough mastery of English and Sanskrit. It is true that——will be able to pick up English soon, should he come here, but I am as yet unable to bring men here to learn. We want them, first, who will be able to teach. In the second place, I trust those that will not desert me in prosperity and adversity alike. . . . The most trustworthy men are needed. Then, after the foundation is laid, let him, who will, come and make a noise, there is no fear. ——gave no proof of wisdom in being carried away by a hubbub and joining the party of those charlatans. Sir, granted that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was a sham, granted that it has been a very serious mistake, indeed. to take refuge in him, but what is the way out now? What if one life is spent in vain, but shall a *man* eat his own words? Can there be such a thing as having a dozen husbands? Any of you may join any party you like, I have no objection, no, not in the least, but travelling this world over I find that save and except his circle alone, everywhere else thought and act are at variance. For those that belong to him, I have the utmost love, the utmost confidence. I have no alternative in the matter. Call me one-sided if you will, but there you have my *bona fide* avowal. If but a thorn pricks the foot of one who has surrendered himself to Shri Ramakrishna, it makes my bones ache. All others I love; you will find very few men so unsectarian as I am; but you must excuse me, I have that bit of bigotry. . . . If I do not appeal to his name, whose else shall I? It will be time enough to seek for a big Guru in our next birth, but in this, it is that unlearned Brahmin who has bought this body of mine for ever.

I give you a bit of my mind; don't be angry, pray. I am your slave so long as you are his—step a hair's breadth outside that, and you and I are on a par. All the sects and societies that you see, the whole host of them, inside the country or out, he has already swallowed them all, my brother, मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् —"These have verily been killed by Myself long ago, be only the instrument, O Arjuna." Today or tomorrow they will be merged in your own body. O man of little faith! Through his grace, ब्रह्माण्डं गोष्पदायते —"The whole universe becomes a hoof-mark of the cow." Be not traitors, that is a sin past atonement. Name, fame, good deeds, यज्जुहोषि, यत्तपस्यसि, यदश्नासि, etc., "Whatever sacrifices you perform, whatever penances you undergo, whatever you eat"—surrender everything to his feet. What on earth do we want? He has given us refuge, what more do we want? Bhakti is verily its own reward—what else is needed? My brother, he who made men of us by feeding and clothing and imparting wisdom and knowledge, who opened the eyes of our self, whom day and night we found the living God—must we be traitors to him! ! ! And you forget the mercy of such a Lord! The lives of Buddha and Krishna and Jesus are matters of ancient history, and doubts are entertained about their historicity, and you in spite of seeing the greatness of Shri Ramakrishna's life in flesh and blood sometimes lose your head! Fie upon you! I have nothing to say. His likeness is being worshipped in and out of your country, by godless and heartless men, and you are stranded at times on disbelief! ! In a breath he will create for himself hundreds of thousands of such as you are. Blessed is your birth, blessed your lineage, and blessed your country that you were allowed to take the dust of his feet. Well, I can't help. He is protecting us, forsooth—I see it before my eyes. Insane that you are, is it through my own strength that beauty like that of fairies, and hundreds of thousands of rupees, lose their attraction and appear as nothing to me? Or is it he who is protecting me? He who has no faith in him and no reverence for the Holy Mother will be a downright loser, I tell you plainly.

. . . Haramohan has written about his troubled circumstances, and says he will be dislodged from his home soon. He has asked for some lectures; but I have none at present. but have still some money left in my purse which I shall send him. So he need not be afraid. I could send him at once, but I suspect that the money I last sent miscarried, therefore I postpone sending it. Secondly, I know, besides, of no address to send it to. I see the Madrasis have failed to start the paper. Practical wisdom is altogether wanting in the Hindu race, I see. Whenever you promise to do any work, you must do it exactly at the appointed time, or people lose their faith in you. Money matters require a speedy reply. . . . If Master Mahâshaya be willing, tell him to be my Calcutta agent, for I have an implicit faith in him, and he understands a good deal of these things; it is not for a childish and noisy rabble to do it. Tell him to fix upon a centre, an address that will not change every hour, and to which I shall direct all my Calcutta correspondence. . . . Business is business. . . .

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

110*

LONDON,
13th November, 1895.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am very glad to receive your letter. It is excellent work that you are doing. R—is very liberal and open-handed, but no advantage should be taken over him for that reason. About the raising of funds by Shrimân—, well, it is a fair enterprise; but my boy, this is a very queer world, where even the World-Gods Brahmâ and Vishnu find it difficult to evade the clutches of lust and gold. Wherever there is any the least concern with money, there is the chance for misunderstanding. Let therefore nobody undertake such work as raising money on behalf of the Math. . . . Whenever you hear of any householder collecting funds in my or our name on the plea of erecting a Math, or some such thing, the first thing you should do is to distrust him, and never set your hand to it. The more so, as householders of poor means take to various tricks to supply their wants. Therefore, if ever a trustworthy devotee or a householder with a heart, being of affluent circumstances, undertakes such works as the founding of a Math, or if the funds raised be kept in the custody of a trusty householder of wealth—well and good, otherwise never have a hand in it. On the contrary, you must dissuade others from such a thing. You are but a boy and are ignorant of the snare of gold. Opportunities will turn even a staunch moralist into a cheat. This is the way of the world. . . .

It is not at all in our nature to do a work conjointly. It is to this that our miserable condition is due. He who knows how to obey knows how to command. Learn obedience first. Among these Western nations, with such a high spirit of independence, the spirit of obedience is equally strong. We are all of us self-important—which never produces any work. Great enterprise, boundless courage, tremendous energy, and, above all, perfect obedience—these are the only traits that lead to individual and national regeneration. These traits are altogether lacking in us.

Go on with the work as you are doing it, but then you must pay particular attention to study. J—Babu has sent a Hindi magazine, in which Pandit R—of Alwar has published a translation of my Chicago Address. Please convey my special indebtedness and thanks to both.

Let me now address myself to you. Take particular care to start a centre in Rajputana. It must be in some central place like Jaipur or Ajmere. Then branches must be established in towns like Alwar and Khetri. You must mix with all, we do not want to quarrel with any. Give my loving embrace to Pandit N—; the man is very energetic and will be a very practical man in time. Tender my loving regards to Mr. M—and—ji too. A Religious Association or something of the kind has been afoot at Ajmere—what is it? Let me know all about it. M—Babu writes that he and others have written me letters; but I have not received any up till now. . . . About Maths, or centres, or anything of the kind, it is no use starting them in Calcutta; Varanasi is the place for them. I have many plans like that, but all depends on funds. You will know of them by degrees. You might have noticed from the papers that our movement is steadily gaining ground in England. Every enterprise in this country takes some time to have a go. But once John Bull sets the hand to a thing, he will never let it go. The Americans are quick, but they are somewhat like straw on fire, ready to be extinguished. Do not preach to the public that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was an Incarnation, and things of that sort. I have some followers at——, look after them. . . . Infinite power will come unto you—never fear. Be pure, have faith, be obedient.

Teach against the marriage of boys. No scripture ever sanctions it. But for the present say nothing against little girls being married. Directly you stop the marriage of boys, that of girls will stop of itself. Girls surely are not going to marry among themselves! Write to the Secretary, Arya Samaj, Lahore, asking the whereabouts of a Sannyasin named Achyutananda who used to live with them. Make special inquiry of the man. . . . Never fear.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

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228 W. 39TH ST., NEW YORK.
20th December, 1895.

DEAR ALASINGA,

. . . Have patience and be faithful unto death. Do not fight among yourselves. Be perfectly pure in money dealings. . . . We will do great things yet. . . . So long as you have faith and honesty and devotion everything will prosper.

. . . In translating the Suktas, pay particular attention to the Bhâshyakâras (commentators) and pay no attention whatever to the orientalists. They do not understand a single thing about our Shâstras (scriptures). It is not given to dry philologists to understand philosophy or religion. . . . For instance, the word आनीद्वातं in the Rig-Veda was translated —"He lived without breathing". Now, here the reference is really to the chief Prâna, and अवातं has the root-meaning for unmoved, that is, without vibration. It describes the state in which the universal cosmic energy, or Prana, remains before the Kalpa (cycle of creation) begins: vide—the Bhashyakaras. Explain according to *our* sages and not according to the so-called European scholars. What do they know? . . . Be bold and fearless and the road will be clear. . . . Mind, you have nothing whatsoever to do with the Theosophists. If you all stand by me and do not lose patience, I assure you we shall do great work yet. The great work will be in England, my boy, by and by. I feel you sometimes get disheartened, and I am afraid you get temptations to play in the hands of the Theosophists. Mind you, the Guru-Bhakta will conquer the world—this is the one evidence of history. . . . It is faith that makes a lion of a man. You must always remember how much work I have to do. Sometimes I have to deliver two or three lectures a day—and thus I make my way against all odds—hard work; any weaker man would die.

. . . Hold on with faith and strength; be true, be honest, be pure, and don't quarrel among yourselves. Jealousy is the bane of our race.

With love to you and all our friends there,

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

112

NEW YORK,
1895.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,[1]

The work here is going on splendidly. I have been working incessantly at two classes a day since my arrival. Tomorrow I go out of town with Mr. Leggett for a week's holiday. Did you know Madame Antoinette Sterling, one of your greatest singers? She is very much interested in the work.

I have made over all the secular part of the work to a committee and am free from all that botheration. I have no aptitude for organizing. It nearly breaks me to pieces.

. . . What about the *Nârada-Sutra*? There will be a good sale of the book here, I am sure. I have now taken up the *Yoga-Sutras,* and take them up one by one and go through all the commentators along with them. These talks are all taken down, and when completed will form the fullest annotated translation of Patanjali in English. Of course it will be rather a big work.

At Trübner's I think there is an edition of *Kurma Purâna.* The commentator, Vijnâna Bhikshu, is continually quoting from that book. I have never seen the book myself. Will you kindly find time to go and see if in it there are some chapters on Yoga? If so, will you kindly send me a copy? Also of the *Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika, Shiva-Samhitâ,* and any other book on Yoga? The originals of course. I shall send you the money for them as soon as they arrive. Also a copy of *Sânkhya-Kârikâ* of Ishwara Krishna by John Davies. Just now your letter reached along with Indian letters. The one man who is ready is ill. The others say that they cannot come over on the spur of the moment. So far it seems unlucky. I am sorry they could not come. What can be done? Things go slow in India

Ramanuja's theory is that the bound soul, or Jiva, has its perfection involved, entered, into itself. When this perfection again evolves, it becomes free. The Advaitin declares both these to take place only in show; there was neither involution nor evolution. Both processes were Maya, or *apparent* only.

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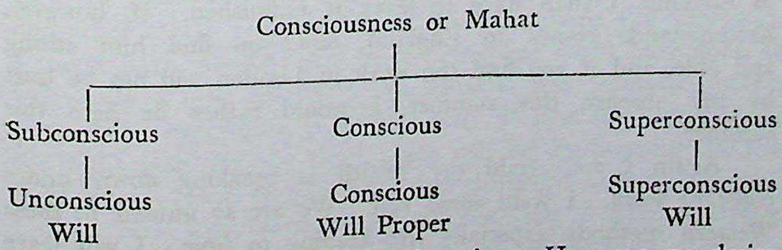
[1] E. T. Sturdy.

In the first place, the soul is not *essentially a knowing* being. *Sachchidananda* is only an approximate definition, and *Neti Neti* is the essential definition. Schopenhauer caught this idea of willing from the Buddhists. We have it also in *Vâsanâ* or *Trishnâ,* Pali *tanha.* We also admit that it is the *cause* of all manifestations which are, in their turn, its effects. But, being a cause, it must be a combination of the *Absolute* and *Maya.* Even knowledge, being a compound, cannot be the Absolute itself, but it is the nearest approach to it, and higher than Vasana, conscious or unconscious. The Absolute first becomes the mixture of knowledge, then, in the second degree, that of will. If it be said that plants have no consciousness, that they are at best only unconscious wills, the answer is that even the *unconscious plant-will* is a manifestation of the consciousness, not of the plant, but of the cosmos, the Mahat of the Sankhya Philosophy. The Buddhist analysis of everything into will is imperfect, firstly, because will is itself a compound, and secondly, because consciousness or knowledge, which is a compound of the first degree, precedes it. *Knowledge is action.* First *action,* then *reaction.* When the mind perceives, then, as the reaction, it *wills.* The will is in the mind. So it is absurd to say that will is the last analysis. Deussen is playing into the hands of the Darwinists.

But evolution must be brought in accordance with the more exact science of Physics, which can demonstrate that every evolution must be preceded by an involution. This being so, the evolution of the *Vasana* or will, must be preceded by the involution of the *Mahat* or cosmic consciousness.



There is no willing without knowing. How can we desire unless we know the object of desire?

The apparent difficulty vanishes as soon as you divide knowledge also into subconscious and conscious. And why not? If will can be so treated, why not its father?

VIVEKANANDA.

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228 W. 39TH STREET,
NEW YORK,
16th December, 1895.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,[1]

All your letters reached by one mail today. Miss Müller also writes me one. She has read in the *Indian Mirror* that Swami Krishnananda is coming over to England. If that is so, he is the strongest man that I can get.

The classes I had here were six in the week, besides a question class. The general attendance varies between 70 to 120. Besides, every Sunday I have a public lecture. The last month my lectures were in a small hall holding about 600. But 900 will come as a rule, 300 standing, and about 300 going off, not finding room. This week therefore I have a bigger hall, with a capacity of holding 1200 people.

There is no admission charged in these lectures, but a collection covers the rent. The newspapers have taken me up this week, and altogether I have stirred up New York considerably this year. If I could have remained here this summer and organized a summer place, the work would be going on sure foundations here. But as I intended to come over in May to England, I shall have to leave it unfinished. If, however, Krishnananda comes to England, and you find him strong and able, and if you find the work in London will not be hurt by my absence this summer, I would rather be here this summer.

Again I am afraid my health is breaking down under constant work. I want some rest. We are so unused to these Western methods, especially the keeping to time. I will leave you to decide all these. The *Brahmavadin* is going on here very satisfactorily. I have begun to write articles on Bhakti; also send them a monthly account of the work. Miss Müller wants to come to America. I do not know whether she will or not. Some friends here are publishing my Sunday lectures. I have sent you a few copies of the first one. I shall send you next mail a few of the next two lectures, and if you like them, I shall ask them to send you a number. Can you manage to get a few hundred copies sold in England? That will encourage them in publishing the subsequent ones.

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[1] E. T. Sturdy.

Next month I go to Detroit, then to Boston, and Harvard University. Then I shall have a rest, and then I come to England, unless you think that things go on without me and with Krishnananda.

Ever yours with love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

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228 W. 39TH STREET,
NEW YORK,
23rd December, 1895.

DEAR SHARAT,

Your letter only made me sad. I see you have lost all enthusiasm. I know all of you, your powers and your limitations. I would not have called you to any task which you are incompetent to do. The only task I would have given you was to teach Elementary Sanskrit, and with the help of dictionaries and other things assist Sturdy in his translations and teachings. I would have moulded you to it. Any one could have done as well—only a little smattering of Sanskrit was absolutely necessary. Well, everything is for the best. If it is the Lord's work, the right man for the right place will be forthcoming in the right time. None of you need feel disturbed. As for Sanyal. I don't care who takes money or not, but I have a strong hatred for child-marriage. I have suffered terribly from it, and it is the great sin for which our nation has to suffer. As such, I would hate myself if I help such a diabolical custom directly or indirectly. I wrote to you pretty plain about it and Sanyal had no right to play a hoax upon me about his "law-suit" and his attempts to become free. I am sorry for his playing tricks on me who have never done him any harm. This is the world. What good you do goes for nothing, but if you stop doing it, then, Lord help you, you are counted as a rogue. Isn't it? Emotional natures like mine are always preyed upon by relatives and friends. This world is merciless. This world is our friend when we are its slaves and no more. This world is broad enough for me. There will always be a corner found for me somewhere. If the people of India do not like me, there will be others who do. I must set my foot to the best of my ability upon this devilish custom of child-marriage. No blame will entail on you. You keep at a safe distance, if you are afraid. I am sorry, very sorry, I cannot have any partnership with such doings as getting husbands for babies. Lord help me, I never had and never will have. Think of the case of Mahendra Babu! Did you ever meet a more cowardly or brutal one than that! I can kill the man who gets a husband for a baby. The upshot of the whole thing is—I want bold, daring, adventurous spirits to help me. Else I will work alone. I have a mission to fulfil. I will work it out alone. I do not care who comes or who goes. Sanyal is already done for by Samsâra. Beware, boy! That was all the advice I thought it my duty to give you. Of course you are great folks now—my words will have no value with you. But I hope the time will come when you will see clearer, know better, and think other thoughts than you are now doing.

Good-bye! I would not bother you any more, and all blessings go with you all. I am very glad I have been of some service to you sometimes if you think so. At least I am pleased with myself for having tried my best to discharge the duties laid on me by my Guru, and well done or ill, I am glad that I tried. So good-bye. Tell Sanyal that I am not at all angry with him, but I am sorry, very sorry. It is not the money—that counts nothing—but the violation of a principle that pained me, and the trick he played on me. Good-bye to him also, and to you all. One chapter of my life is closed. Let others come in their due order. They will find me ready. You need not disturb yourselves at all about me. I want no help from any human being in any country. So good-bye! May the Lord bless you all for ever and ever!

VIVEKANANDA.

115

NEW YORK,
29th December, 1895.

DEAR SISTER,[1]

In this universe where nothing is lost, where we live in the midst of death *in life,* every thought that is thought, in public or in private, in crowded thoroughfares or in the deep recesses of primeval forests, lives. They are continuously trying to become self-embodied, and until they have embodied themselves, they will struggle for expression, and any amount of repression cannot kill them. Nothing can be destroyed—those thoughts that caused evil in the past are also seeking embodiment, to be filtered through repeated expression and, at last, transfigured into perfect good.

As such, there is a mass of thought which is at the present time struggling to get expression. This new thought is telling us to give up our dreams of dualism, of good and evil in essence, and the still wilder dream of suppression. It teaches us that higher direction and not destruction is the law. It teaches us that it is not a world of bad and good, but good and better —and still better. It stops short of nothing but acceptance. It teaches that no situation is hopeless, and as such accepts every form of mental, moral, or spiritual thought where it already stands, and without a word of condemnation tells it that so far it has done good, now is the time to do better. What in old times was thought of as the elimination of bad, it teaches as the transfiguration of evil and the doing of better. It, above all, teaches that the kingdom of heaven is already in existence if we will have it, that perfection is already in man if he will see it.

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[1] Miss S. Farmer.

The Greenacre meetings last summer were so wonderful, simply because you opened yourself fully to that thought which has found in you so competent a medium of expression, and because you took your stand on the highest teaching of this thought that the kingdom of heaven already exists.

You have been consecrated and chosen by the Lord as a channel for converting this thought into life, and every one that helps you in this wonderful work is serving the Lord.

Our scripture teaches that he who serves the servants of the Lord is His highest worshipper. You are a servant of the Lord, and as a disciple of Krishna I will always consider it a privilege and worship to render you any service in the carrying out of your inspired mission wherever I be.

Ever your affectionate brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

116

228 W. 39TH STREET,
NEW YORK,
16th January, 1896.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,[1]

Many many thanks for the books. The *Sânkhya Kârika* is a very good book, and the *Kurma Purâna,* though I do not find in it all I expected, has a few verses on Yoga. The words dropped in my last letter were *Yoga-Sutra,* which I am translating with notes from various authorities. I want to incorporate the chapter in *Kurma Purana* in my notes. I have very enthusiastic accounts of your classes from Miss MacLeod. Mr. Galsworthy seems to be very much interested now.

I have begun my Sunday lectures here and also the classes. Both are very enthusiastically received. I make them all free and take up a collection to pay the hall etc. Last Sunday's lecture was very much appreciated and is in the press. I shall send you a few copies next week. It was the outline of our work.

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[1] E. T. Sturdy.

As my friends have a stenographer (Goodwin) engaged, all these class lessons and public lectures are taken down. I intend to send you a copy of each. They may suggest you some ideas.

My great want here is a strong man like you, possessing intellect, and ability, and love. In this nation of universal education, all seem to melt down into a mediocrity, and the few able are weighed down by the eternal money-making.

I have a chance of getting a piece of land in the country, and some buildings on it, plenty of trees, and a river, to serve as a summer meditation resort. That of course requires a committee to look after it in my absence, as also the handling of money and printing and other matters.

I have separated myself entirely from money questions, yet without it the movement cannot go on. So necessarily I have to make over everything executive to a committee, which will look after these things in my absence. Steady work is not in the line of the Americans. The only way they work is in a herd. So let them have it. As to the teaching part, my friends will go over this country from place to place, each one independent, and let them form independent circles. That is the easiest way to spread. Then, when there will be sufficient strength, we shall have early gatherings to concentrate our energies.

The committee is entirely executive, and it is confined to New York alone. . . .

Ever yours with love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

117

23rd January, 1896.

DEAR ALASINGA,

By this time you must have got enough of matter on Bhakti from me. The last copy of *Brahmavâdin,* dated 21st December, is in. I have been smelling something since the last few issues of the *Brahmavadin.* Are you going to join the Theosophists?

This time you simply gave yourselves up. Why, you get in a notice of the Theosophists' lectures in the body of your notes! Any suspicion of my connection with the Theosophists will spoil my work both in America and England, and well it may. They are thought by all people of sound mind to be wrong, and true it is that they are held so, and you know it full well. I am afraid you want to overreach me. You think you can get more subscribers in England by advertising Annie Besant? Fool that you are.

I do not want to quarrel with the Theosophists, but my position is entirely ignoring them. Had they paid for the advertisement? Why should you go forward to advertise them? I shall get more than enough subscribers in England when I go next.

Now, I would have no traitors, I tell you plainly, I would not be played upon by any rogue. No hypocrisy with me. Hoist your flag and give public notice in your paper that you have given up all connections with me, and join the . . . camp of the Theosophists or cease to have anything whatsoever to do with them. I give you very plain words indeed. I shall have one man only to follow me, but he must be true and faithful unto death. I do not care for success or no success. I am tired of this nonsense of preaching all over the world. Did any of Annie Besant's people come to my help when I was in England? Fudge! I must keep my movement *pure,* or I will have none.

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Reply sharp your decision. I am very decided on this point. You ought to have told me so before, had your intentions been such from the very beginning. *The Brahmavadin* is for preaching Vedanta and not Theosophy. I almost lose my patience when I see these underhand dealings. This is the world—those whom you love best and help most try to cheat you.

V.

118*

January, 1896.

DEAR SARADA,

. . . Your idea of the paper is very good indeed. Apply yourself to it heart and soul. . . . Never mind the funds. . . . There are many to preach Christianity and Mohammedanism—you just go through the preaching of your own country's religion. But then if you can get hold of a Mohammedan who is versed in Arabic and have old Arabic books translated, it will be a good plan. There is much of Indian history in the Persian language. If you can have the books translated bit by bit, it will be a good regular item. We want quite a number of writers, then there is the difficult task of getting subscribers. The way out is this: You lead a wandering life; wherever you find Bengali language spoken, thrust the paper on whomsoever you can lay your hands on. Enlist them by vehemence! —they would always turn tail the moment they have to spend something. Never mind anything! Push it on! Begin to contribute articles, all of you who can. It won't do merely to sit idle. You have done a heroic deed! Bravo! Those who falter and vacillate will lag behind, and you will jump straight on top of all! Those that are working for their own salvation will neither have their own nor that of others. Let the commotion that you make be such as to resound to the world's end. There are people who are ready to pick holes in everything, but when it comes to the question of work, not a scent of them can be had! To work!—as far as in you lies! Then I shall go to India and move the whole country. What fear! "Even a snake loses its venom if it is insisted that it has none." These people will go on the negative track till they are actually reduced to nothing! . . .

Gangadhar has done right heroic work! Well done! Kali has joined him in work—thrice well done!! Let one go to Madras, and another to Bombay, let the world shake on its hinges! Oh, the grief! If I could get two or three like me, I could have left the world convulsed. As it is, I have to proceed gently. Move the world to its foundations! Send one to China, another to Japan. What will the poor householders do, with their little bits of life? It is for the Sannyasins, Shiva's demons, to rend the skies with their shouts of "Hara! Hara! Shambho!"

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

119*

228, W. 39, NEW YORK,
24th January, 1896.

DEAR YOGEN,

. . . I am very sorry to hear that your health is not yet all right. Can you go to a very cold climate where there is plenty of snowfall in the winter, Darjeeling, for instance? The severity of the cold will set your stomach right, as it has done in my case. And can you give up altogether the habit of using ghee and spices? Butter digests more quickly than ghee. . . .

Three months more, and I go to England, to try once more to make some stir; the following winter to India—and after that, it depends on the Lord.

Put forth all nerve for the magazine that Sarada is wanting to publish. Ask Shashi to look to it. One thing, neither Kali nor anybody else has any need of coming to England at present. I shall train them first when I go to India, and then they may go wherever they please.

We would do nothing ourselves and would scoff at others who try to do something—this is the bane that has brought about our downfall as a nation. Want of sympathy and lack of energy are at the root of all misery, and you must therefore give these two up. Who but the Lord knows what potentialities there are in particular individuals—let all have opportunities, and leave the rest to the Lord. It is indeed very difficult to have an equal love for all, but without it there is no Mukti.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

120

228 W. 39TH STREET,
NEW YORK,
13th February, 1896.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,[1]

About the Sannyasin coming over from India, I am sure he will help you in the translation work, also in other work. Later on, when I come, I may send him over to America. Today another Sannyasin has been added to the list. This time it is a man who is a genuine American and a religious teacher of some standing in the country. He was Dr. Street. He is now Yogananda, as his leaning is all towards Yoga.

I have been sending regular reports to the *Brahmavâdin* from here. They will be published soon. It takes such a long time for things to reach India! Things are growing nobly in America. As there was no hocus-pocus from the beginning, the Vedanta is drawing the attention of the highest classes in American society. Sarah Bernhardt, the French actress, has been playing "Iziel" here. It is a sort of Frenchified life of Buddha, where a courtesan "Iziel" wants to seduce the Buddha, under the banyan—and the Buddha preaches to her the vanity of the world, whilst she is sitting all the time in Buddha's lap. However, all is well that ends well—the courtesan fails. Madame Bernhardt acts the courtesan. I went to see the Buddha business—and Madame spying me in the audience wanted to have an interview with me. A swell family of my acquaintance arranged the affair. There were besides Madame M. Morrel, the celebrated singer, also the great electrician Tesla. Madame is a very scholarly lady and has studied up the metaphysics a good deal. M. Morrel was being interested, but Mr. Tesla was charmed to hear about the Vedantic Prâna and Âkâsha and the Kalpas, which according to him are the only theories modern science can entertain. Now both Akasha and Prana again are produced from the cosmic Mahat, the Universal Mind, the Brahmâ or Ishvara. Mr. Tesla thinks he can demonstrate mathematically that force and matter are reducible to potential energy. I am to go and see him next week, to get this new mathematical demonstration.

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[1] E. T. Sturdy.

In that case, the Vedantic cosmology will be placed on the surest of foundations. I am working a good deal now upon the cosmology and eschatology[1] of the Vedanta. I clearly see their perfect unison with modern science, and the elucidation of the one will be followed by that of the other. I intend to write a book later on in the form of questions and answers.[2] The first chapter will be on cosmology, showing the harmony between Vedantic theories and modern science.

Brahman = The Absolute
Mahat or Ishvara = Primal Creative Energy
Prana and Akasha = Force and Matter

The eschatology will be explained from the Advaitic standpoint only. That is to say, the dualist claims that the soul after death passes on to the Solar sphere, thence to the Lunar sphere, thence to the Electric sphere. Thence he is accompanied by a Purusha to Brahmaloka. (Thence, says the Advaitist, he goes to Nirvâna.)

Now on the Advaitic side, it is held that the soul neither comes nor goes, and that all these spheres or layers of the universe are only so many varying products of Akasha and Prana. That is to say, the lowest or most condensed is the Solar sphere, consisting of the visible universe, in which Prana appears as physical force, and Akasha as sensible matter. The next is called the Lunar sphere, which surrounds the Solar sphere. This is not the moon at all, but the habitation of the gods, that is to say, Prana appears in it as psychic forces, and Akasha as Tanmâtras, or fine particles. Beyond this is the Electric sphere, that is to say, a condition in which the Prana is almost inseparable from Akasha, and you can hardly tell whether Electricity is force or matter. Next is the Brahmaloka, where there is neither Prana nor Akasha, but both are merged in the *mind-stuff,* the primal energy. And here—there being neither Prana nor Akasha—the Jiva contemplates the whole universe as Samasthi, or the sum total of Mahat or mind. This appears as a Purusha, an abstract universal *soul*, yet not the Absolute, for still there is multiplicity. From this the Jiva finds at last that Unity which is the end. Advaitism says that these are the visions which rise in succession before the Jiva, who himself neither goes nor comes, and that in the same way this present vision has been projected. The projection (Srishti) and dissolution must take place in the same order, only one means going backward, and the other coming out.

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[1] That is, doctrine of the last things—death, judgment, etc.

[2] This plan was never carried out. But in studying the lectures he delivered in London in the year 1896, it is easy to see that his mind was still working on the ideas here announced.

Now as each individual can only see *his own* universe, that universe is created with his bondage and goes away with his liberation, although it remains for others who are in bondage. Now name and form constitute the universe. A wave in the ocean is a wave, only in so far as it is bound by name and form. If the wave subsides, it is the ocean, but that name and form have immediately vanished for ever. So though the name and form of wave could never be without the *water* that was fashioned into the wave by them, yet the name and form themselves were not the wave. They die as soon as ever it returns to water. But other names and forms live in relation to other waves. This name-and-form is called Mâyâ, and the water is Brahman. The wave was nothing but water all the time, yet as a *wave* it had the name and form. Again this name and form cannot remain for one moment separated from the wave, although the wave as water can remain eternally separate from name and form. But because the name and form can never be *separated*, they can never be said to *exist*. Yet they are not *zero*. This is called Maya.

I want to work all this out carefully, but you will see at a glance that I am on the right track. It will take more study in physiology, on the relations between the higher and lower centres to fill out the psychology of mind, Chitta (mind-stuff), and Buddhi (intellect), and so on. But I have clear light now, free of all hocus-pocus. I want to give them dry, hard reason, softened in the sweetest syrup of love and made spicy with intense work, and cooked in the kitchen of Yoga, so that even a baby can easily digest it.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

121

U.S.A.,
17th February, 1896.

DEAR ALASINGA,

. . . I have used some very harsh words in my letters, which you ought to excuse, as you know, I get nervous at times. The work is terribly hard and the more it is growing the harder it is becoming. I need a long rest very badly. Yet a great work is before me in England.

Have patience, my son—it will grow beyond all your expectations. . . . Every work has got to pass through hundreds of difficulties before succeeding. Those that persevere will see the light, sooner or later. Just as I am writing to you, everyone of my bones is paining after last afternoon's long Sunday public lecture.

I have succeeded now in rousing the very heart of the American civilization, New York, but it has been a terrific struggle. . . . I have spent nearly all I had on this New York work and in England. Now things are in such a shape that they will go on. Then you see, to put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and intricate mythology and queer startling psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular, and at the same time meet the requirement of the highest minds—is a task only those can understand who have attempted it.

The dry Advaita must become living—poetic—in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical psychology—and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work. The Lord only knows how far I shall succeed. "To work we have the right, not to the fruits thereof." It is hard work, my boy, hard work! To keep one's self steady in the midst of this whirl of Kâma-Kânchana (lust and gold) and hold on to one's own ideals, until disciples are moulded to conceive of the ideas of realization and perfect renunciation. is indeed difficult work, my boy. Thank God, already there is great success. I cannot blame the missionaries and others for not understanding me—they hardly ever saw a man who did not care in the least about women and money. At first they could not believe it to be possible; how could they? You must not think that the Western nations have the same ideas of chastity and purity as the Indians. Their equivalents are virtue and courage. . . . People are now flocking to me. Hundreds have now become convinced that there are men who can really control their bodily desires; and reverence and respect for these principles are growing. All things come to him who waits. May you be blessed for ever and ever!

Yours with love.
VIVEKANANDA.

122

NEW YORK,
14th April, 1896.

DEAR DR. NANJUNDA RAO,

I received your note this morning. As I am sailing for England tomorrow, I can only write a few hearty lines. I have every sympathy with your proposed magazine for boys, and will do my best to help it on. You ought to make it independent, following the same lines as the *Brahmavâdin,* only making the style and matter much more popular. As for example, there is a great chance, much more than you ever dream of, for those wonderful stories scattered all over the Sanskrit literature, to be rewritten and made popular. That should be the one great feature of your journal. I will write stories, as many as I can, when time permits. Avoid all attempts to make the journal scholarly—the *Brahmavadin* stands for that—and it will slowly make its way all over the world, I am sure. Use the simplest language possible, and you will succeed. The main feature should be the teaching of *principles* through stories. Don't make it metaphysical at all. As to the business part, keep it wholly in your hands—"Too many cooks spoil the broth". In India the one thing we lack is the power of combination, organization, the first secret of which is obedience.

I have promised also to help starting a magazine in Bengali in Calcutta. Now, only the first year I used to charge for my lectures. The last two years my work was entirely free of all charges. As such I have almost no money to send you or the Calcutta people. But I will get people to help you with funds very soon. Go on bravely. Do not expect success in a day or a year. Always hold on to the highest. Be steady. Avoid jealousy and selfishness. Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity, and your country, and you will move the world. Remember it is the *person*, the life, which is the secret of power—nothing else. Keep this letter and read the last lines whenever you feel worried or jealous. Jealousy is the bane of all slaves. It is the bane of our nation. Avoid that always. All blessings attend you and all success.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

123*

NEW YORK,
14th April, 1896.

DEAR SARADA,

Glad to hear everything in your letter. I have got news that Sharat arrived safe. I am in receipt of your letter and the copy of the *Indian Mirror*. Your contribution is good, go on writing regularly. It is very easy to search for faults, but the characteristic of a saint lies in looking for merits—never forget this. . . . You need a little business faculty. . . . Now what you want is organization—that requires strict obedience and division of labour. I shall write out everything in every particular from England, for which I start tomorrow. I am determined to make you decent workers thoroughly organized. . . .

The term "Friend" can be used with all. In the English language you have not that sort of cringing politeness common in Bengali, and such Bengali terms done into English become ridiculous. That Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was God, and all that sort of thing, has no go in countries like this.

M—has a tendency to put that stuff down everybody's throat, but that will make our movement a little sect. You keep aloof from such attempts; at the same time, if people worship him as God, no harm. Neither encourage nor discourage. The masses will always have the *person,* the higher ones, the principle. We want both. But principles are universal, *not* persons. Therefore stick to the principles he taught, let people think whatever they like of his person. . . . Truce to all quarrels and jealousies and BIGOTRY! These will spoil everything. "The first should be last." . . . मद्भक्तानाञ्च ये भक्तास्ते मे भक्ततमा मताः —"Those who are the devotees of My devotees are My best devotees".

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

124*

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM,
READING,
27th April, 1896.

DEAR——,

. . . Let me write something for you all.[1] It is not for gaining personal authority that I do this, but for your good and for fulfilling the purpose for which the Lord came. He gave me the charge of you all, and you shall contribute to the great well-being of the world—though most of you are not yet aware of it—this is the special reason of my writing to you. It will be a great pity if any feeling of jealousy or egotism gain ground amongst you. Is it possible for those to establish cordial relations on earth who cannot cordially live with one another for any length of time? No doubt it is an evil to be bound by laws, but it is necessary at the immature stage to be guided by rules; in other words, as the Master used to say, the sapling must be hedged round, and so on. Secondly, it is quite natural for idle minds to indulge in gossip, and factionmongering and so forth. Hence I jot down the following hints If you follow them, you will undoubtedly prosper, but if you don't do so, then there is a danger of all our labours coming to naught.

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[1] Members of the Alambazar Math.

First let me write about the management of the Math:

1. For the purposes of the Math please hire a commodious house or garden, where everyone may have a small room to himself. There must be a spacious hall where the books may be kept, and a smaller room for meeting the visitors. If possible, there should be another big hall in the house where every day study of the scriptures and religious discourses will be held for the public.

2. Anyone wishing to visit anybody in the Math should see him only and depart, without troubling others.

3. By turns someone should be present in the hall for a few hours every day for the public, so that they may get satisfactory replies to what they come to ask.

4. Everyone must keep to his room and except on special business must not go to others' rooms. Anyone who wishes may go to the Library and read, but it should be strictly forbidden to smoke there or talk with others. The reading should be silent.

5. It shall be wholly forbidden to huddle together in a room and chat the whole day away, with any number of outsiders coming and joining in the hubbub.

6. Only those that are seekers after religion may come and peacefully wait in the Visitors' Hall, and when they have seen the particular persons they want, they should depart. Or, if they have any general question to ask, they should refer to the person in charge of that function for the day and leave.

7. Tale-bearing, caballing, or reporting scandals about others should be altogether eschewed.

8. A small room should serve as the office. The Secretary should live in that room, which should contain paper, ink, and other materials for letter-writing. He should keep an account of the income and expenditure. All correspondence should come to him, and he should deliver all letters *unopened* to their addressees. Books and pamphlets should be sent to the Library.

9. There will be a small room for smoking, which should not be indulged in outside this room.

10. He who wants to indulge in invectives or show temper must do so outside the boundaries of the Math. This should not be deviated from even by an inch.

The Governing Body

1. Every year a President should be elected by a majority of votes. The next year, another, and so on.

2. For this year make Brahmananda the President and likewise make another the Secretary, and elect a third man for superintending the worship, etc., as well as the arrangement of food.

3. The Secretary shall have another function, viz to keep watch over the general health. Regarding this, I have three instructions to give:

(*i*) In every room for each man there shall be a *Nair* charpoy, mattress, etc. Everyone must keep his room clean.

(*ii*) All arrangements must be made to provide clear and pure water for drinking and cooking purposes, for it is a deadly sin to cook sacramental food in impure or unclean water.

(*iii*) Give everyone two ochre cloaks of the type that you have made for Saradananda, and see that clothing is kept clean.

4. Anyone wishing to be a Sannyasin should be admitted as a Brahmacharin first. He should live one year at the Math and one year outside, after which he may be initiated into sannyasa.

5. Make over charge of the worship to one of these Brahmacharins, and change them now and then.

Departments

There shall be the following departments in the Math:

I. *Study.* II. *Propaganda.* III. *Religious Practice.*

1. *Study*—The object of this department is to provide books and teachers for those who want to study. Every morning and evening the teachers should be ready for them.

II. *Propaganda*—Within the Math and abroad. The preachers in the Math should teach the enquirers by reading out scriptures to them and by means of question-classes. The preachers abroad will preach from village to village and try to start Maths like the above in different places.

III. *Religious Practice*—This department will try to provide those who want to practise with the requisites for this. But it should not be allowed that because one has taken to religious practice he will prevent others from study or preaching. Anyone infringing this rule shall be immediately asked to clear out, and this is imperative.

The preachers at home should give lessons on devotion, knowledge, Yoga, and work by turns; for this, the days and hours should be fixed, and the routine hung up at the door of the class-room. That is to say, a seeker after devotion may not present himself on the day fixed for knowledge and feel wounded thereby; and so on.

None of you are fit for the Vâmâchâra form of practice. Therefore this should on no account be practised at the Math. Anyone demurring to this must step out of this Order. This form of practice must never even be mentioned in the Math. Ruin shall seize the wicked man, both here and hereafter, who would introduce vile Vamachara into His fold!

SOME GENERAL REMARKS

1. If any woman comes to have a talk with a Sannyasin, she should do it in the Visitors' Hall. No woman shall be allowed to enter any other room—except the Worship-room.

2. No Sannyasin shall be allowed to reside in the Women's Math. Anyone refusing to obey this rule shall be expelled from the Math. "Better an empty fold than a wicked herd."

3. Men of evil character shall be rigorously kept out. On no pretence shall their shadow even cross the threshold of my room. If anyone amongst you become wicked, turn him out at once, whoever he be. We want no black sheep. The Lord will bring lots of good people.

4. Any woman can come to the class-room (or preaching hall) during class time or preaching hour, but must leave the place directly when that period is over.

5. Never show temper or harbour jealousy, or backbite another in secret. It would be the height of cruelty and hard-heartedness to take note of others' shortcomings instead of rectifying one's own.

6. There should be fixed hour for meals. Everyone must have a seat and a low dining table. He will sit on the former and put his plate on the latter, as is the custom in Rajputana.

THE OFFICE-BEARERS

All the office-bearers you should elect by ballot, as was the mandate of Lord Buddha. That is to say, one should propose that such and such should be the President this year; and all should write on bits of paper "yes" or "no" and put them in a pitcher. If the 'yeas" have a majority, he should be elected President, and so on. Though you should elect office-bearers in this way, yet I suggest that this year Brahmananda should be President, Nirmalananda, Secretary and Treasurer, Sadananda, Librarian, and Ramakrishnananda, Abhedananda, Turiyananda, and Trigunatitananda should take charge of the teaching and preaching work by turns, and so on.

It is no doubt a good idea that Trigunatita has of starting a magazine. But I shall consent to it if only you can work jointly.

About doctrines and so forth I have to say only this, that if anyone accepts Paramahamsa Deva as Avatara, etc., it is all right; if he doesn't do so, it is just the same. The truth about it is that in point of character, Paramahamsa Deva beats all previous record; and as regards teaching, he was more liberal, more original, and more progressive than all his predecessors. In other words, the older Teachers were rather one-sided, while the teaching of this new Incarnation or Teacher is that the best point of Yoga, devotion, knowledge, and work must be combined now so as to form a new society. . . . The older ones were no doubt good, but this is the new religion of this age—the synthesis of Yoga, knowledge, devotion, and work—the propagation of knowledge and devotion to all, down to the very lowest, without distinction of age or sex. The previous Incarnations were all right, but they have been synthesised in the person of Ramakrishna. For the ordinary man and the beginner, steady devotion (nishthâ) to an ideal is of paramount importance. That is to say, teach them that all great Personalities should be duly honoured, but homage should be paid now to Ramakrishna. There can be no vigour without steady devotion. Without it one cannot preach with the intensity of a Mahâvira (Hanumân). Besides, the previous ones have become rather old. Now we have a new India, with its new God, new religion, and new Vedas. When, O Lord, shall our land be free from this eternal dwelling upon the past? Well, a little bigotry also is a necessity. But we must harbour no antagonistic feelings towards others.

If you consider it wise to be guided by my ideas and if you follow these rules, then I shall supply you all necessary funds. . . . Moreover, please show this letter to Gour-Mâ, Yogin-Mâ, and others, and through them establish a Women's Math. Let Gour-Ma be the President there for one year, and so on. But none of you shall be allowed to visit the place. They will manage their own affairs. They will not have to work at your dictation. I shall supply all necessary expenses for that work also.

May the Lord guide you in the right direction! Two persons went to see the Lord Jagannatha. One of them beheld the Deity—while the other saw some trash that was haunting his mind! My friends, many have no doubt served the Master, but whenever anyone would be disposed to consider himself an extraordinary personage, he should think that although he has associated with Shri Ramakrishna, he has seen only the trash that was uppermost in his mind! Were it not so, he would manifest the results. The Master himself used to quote. "They would sing and dance in the name of the Lord but come to grief in the end." The root of that degeneration is egotism—to think that one is just as great as any other, indeed! "He used to love me too!"—one would plead. Alas, Nick Bottom, would you then be thus translated? Would such a man envy or quarrel with another and degrade himself? Bear in mind that through His grace lots of men will be turned out with the nobility of gods—ay, wherever

His mercy would drop. . . . Obedience is the first duty. Well, just do with alacrity what I ask you to. Let me see how you carry out these few small things. Then gradually great things will come to pass.

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Please read the contents of this letter to all and let me know whether you consider the suggestions worth carrying out. Please tell Brahmananda that he who is the servant of all is their true master. He never becomes a leader in whose love there is a consideration of high or low. He whose love knows no end, and never stops to consider high or low, has the whole world lying at his feet. V.

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63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD, LONDON,
May, 1896.

DEAR SISTER,[1]

In London once more. The climate now in England is nice and cool. We have fire in the grate. We have a whole house to ourselves, you know, this time. It is small but convenient, and in London they do not cost so much as in America. Don't you know what I was thinking—about your mother! I just wrote her a letter and duly posted it to her, care of Monroe & Co., 7 Rue Scribe, Paris. Some old friends are here, and Miss MacLeod came over from the Continent. She is good as gold, and as kind as ever. We have a nice little family, in the house, with another monk from India. Poor man!—a typical Hindu, with nothing of that pluck and go which I have; he is always dreamy and gentle and sweet! That won't do. I will try to put a little activity into him. I have had two classes already—they will go on for four or five months, and after that to India I go. But it is to Amerique—there where the heart is. I love the

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[1] Miss Mary Hale.

Yankee land. I like to see new things. I do not care a fig to loaf about old ruins and mope a life out about old histories and keep sighing about the ancients. I have too much vigour in my blood for that. In America is the place, the people, the opportunity for everything. I have become horribly radical. I am just going to India to see what I can do in that awful mass of conservative jelly-fish, and start a new thing, entirely new—simple, strong, new, and fresh as the first born baby. The eternal, the infinite, the omnipresent, the omniscient is a principle, not a person. You, I, and everyone are but embodiments of that principle; and the more of this infinite principle is embodied in a person, the greater is he, and all in the end will be the perfect embodiment of that, and thus all will be one, as they are now essentially. This is all there is of religion, and the practice is through this feeling of oneness that is love. All old fogey forms are mere old superstitions. Now, why struggle to keep them alive? Why give thirsty people ditch-water to drink whilst the river of life and truth flows by? This is only human selfishness, nothing else. Life is short—time is flying—that place and people where one's ideas work best should be the country and the people for everyone. Ay for a dozen bold hearts, large, noble, and sincere!

I am very well indeed and enjoying life immensely.

Yours ever with love,
VIVEKANANDA.

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63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD, LONDON,
7th June, 1896.

DEAR MISS NOBLE,

My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.

This world is in chains of superstition. I pity the oppressed, whether man or woman, and I pity more the oppressors.

One idea that I see clear as daylight is that misery is caused by *ignorance* and nothing else. Who will give the world light? Sacrifice in the past has been the Law, it will be, alas, for ages to come. The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundred are necessary with eternal love and pity.

Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need for those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.

It is no superstition with you, I am sure, you have the making in you of a world-mover, and others will also come. Bold words and bolder deeds are what we want. Awake, awake, great ones! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call. What more is in life? What greater work? The details come to me as I go. I never make plans. Plans grow and work themselves. I only say, awake, awake!

May all blessings attend you for ever!

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

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63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD, LONDON, S.W.,
6th July, 1896.

DEAR FRANKINCENSE,[1]

. . . Things are going on with me very well on this side of the Atlantic.

The Sunday lectures were quite successful; so were the classes. The season has ended, and I too am thoroughly exhausted. I am going to make a tour in Switzerland with Miss Müller. The Galsworthys have been very very kind. Joe brought them round splendidly. I simply admire Joe in her tact and quiet way. She is a feminine statesman or woman. She can wield a kingdom. I have seldom seen such strong yet good common sense in a human being. I will return next autumn and take up the work in America.

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[1] Mr. Francis Leggett whom Swamiji addressed thus.

The night before last I was at a party at Mrs. Martin's, about whom you must already know a good deal from Joe.

Well, the work is growing silently yet surely in England. Almost every other man or woman came to me and talked about the work. This British Empire with all its drawbacks is the greatest machine that ever existed for the dissemination of ideas. I mean to put my ideas in the centre of this machine, and they will spread all over the world. Of course, all great work is slow, and the difficulties are too many, especially as we Hindus are the conquered race. Yet, that is the very reason why it is bound to work, for spiritual ideals have always come from the downtrodden. Jews overwhelmed the Roman Empire with their spiritual ideals. You will be pleased to know that I am also learning my lessons every day in patience and, above all, in sympathy. I think I am beginning to see the Divine, even inside the high and mighty Anglo-Indians. I think I am slowly approaching to that state when I should be able to love the very "Devil" himself, if there were any.

At twenty years of age I was the most unsympathetic, uncompromising fanatic; I would not walk on the footpath on the theatre side of the streets in Calcutta. At thirty-three, I can live in the same house with prostitutes and never would think of saying a word of reproach to them. Is it degenerate? Or is it that I am broadening out into the Universal Love which is the Lord Himself? Again, I have heard that if one does not see the evil round him, he cannot do good work—he lapses into a sort of fatalism. I do not see that. On the other hand, my power of work is immensely increasing and becoming immensely effective. Some days I get into a sort of ecstasy. I feel that I must bless every one, everything, love and embrace everything, and I do see that evil is a delusion. I am in one of these moods now, dear Francis, and am actually shedding tears of joy at the thought of you and Mrs. Leggett's love and kindness to me. I bless the day I was born. I have had so much of kindness and love here, and that Love Infinite that brought me into being has guarded every one of my actions, good or bad, (don't be frightened) for what am I, what was I ever, but a tool in His hand?—for whose service I have given up everything, my beloved ones, my joys, my life. He is my playful darling, I am His playfellow. There is neither rhyme nor reason in the universe! What reason binds Him? He the playful one is playing these tears and laughters over all parts of the play! Great fun, great fun, as Joe says.

It is a funny world, and the funniest chap you ever saw is He—the Beloved Infinite! Fun, is it not? Brotherhood or playmatehood—a school of romping children let out to play in this playground of the world! Isn't it? Whom to praise, whom to blame, it is all His play. They want explanations, but how can you explain Him? He is brainless, nor has He any reason. He is fooling us with little brains and reason, but this time He won't find me napping.

I have learnt a thing or two: Beyond, beyond reason and learning and talking is the feeling, the "Love", the "Beloved". Ay, Saké, fill up the cup and we will be mad.

Yours ever in madness,
VIVEKANANDA.

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ENGLAND,
14th July, 1896.

DEAR DR. NANJUNDA RAO,

The numbers of *Prabuddha Bharata* have been received and distributed too to the class. It is very satisfactory. It will have a great sale no doubt in India. In America I may get also a number of subscribers. I have already arranged for advertising it in America and Goodyear has done it already. But here in England the progress will be slower indeed. The great drawback here is—they all want to start papers of their own; and it is right that it should be so, seeing that, after all, no foreigner will ever write the English language as well as the native Englishman, and the ideas, when put in good English, will spread farther than in Hindu English. Then again it is much more difficult to write a story in a foreign language than an essay. I am trying my best to get you subscribers here. But you must not depend on any *foreign help*. Nations, like individuals, must help themselves. This is real patriotism. If a nation cannot do that, its time has not yet come. It must wait. It is from Madras that the new light *must* spread all over India. With this end you must work. One point I will remark however. The cover is simply barbarous. It is awful and hideous. If it is possible change it. Make it symbolical and simple. Without human figures at all. The banyan tree does not mean awakening nor does the hill, nor the saint, nor the European couple. The lotus is a symbol of regeneration.

We are awfully behindhand in art, especially in that of painting. For instance, make a small scene of spring reawakening in a forest, showing how the leaves and buds are coming again. Slowly go on, there are hundreds of ideas to be put forward. You see the symbol I made for the *Raja-Yoga,* printed by Longman Green and Co. You can get it at Bombay. It consists of my lectures on Raja-Yoga in New York.

I am going to Switzerland next Sunday, and shall return to London in the autumn and take up the work again. . . . I want rest very badly, you know.

Yours with all blessings, etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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SWITZERLAND,
August, 1896.

DEAR——,[1]

Be you holy and, above all, sincere and do not for a moment give up your trust in the Lord and you will see the light. Whatever is truth will remain for ever; whatever is not, none can preserve. We are helped in being born in a time when everything is quickly searched out. Whatever others think or do, lower not your standard of purity, morality, and love of God; above all, beware of all secret organizations. No one who loves God need fear any jugglery. Holiness is the highest and divinest power in earth and in heaven. "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone is opened the way to God." Do not care for a moment who joins hands with you or not, be sure that you touch the hand of the Lord. That is enough. . . .

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[1] Swami Kripananda (Leon Landsberg).

I went to the glacier of Monte Rosa yesterday and gathered a few hardy flowers growing almost in the midst of eternal snow. I send you one in this letter hoping that you will attain to a similar spiritual hardihood amidst all the snow and ice of this earthly life. . . .

Your dream was very, very beautiful. In dream our souls read a layer of our mind which we do not read in our waking hours, and however unsubstantial imagination may be, it is behind the imagination that all unknown psychic truths lie. Take heart. We will try to do what we can for the good of humanity—the rest depends upon the Lord. . . .

Well, do not be anxious, do not be in a hurry. Slow, persistent and silent work does everything. The Lord is great. We will succeed, my boy. We must. Blessed be His name!

Here in America are no Ashramas. Would there was one! How would I like it, and what an amount of good it would do to this country!

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SWITZERLAND,
8th August, 1896.

DEAR GOODWIN,

I am now taking rest. I read from different letters a lot about Kripananda. I am sorry for him. There must be something wrong in his head. Let him alone. None of you need bother about him.

As for hurting me, that is not in the power of gods or devils. So be at rest. It is unswerving love and perfect unselfishness that conquer everything. We Vedantists in every difficulty ought to ask the subjective question, "Why do I see that?" "Why can I not conquer this with love?"

I am very glad at the reception the Swami has met with, also at the good work he is doing. Great work requires great and persistent effort for a long time. Neither need we trouble ourselves if a few fail. It is in the nature of things that many should fall, that troubles should come, that tremendous difficulties should arise, that selfishness and all the other devils in the human heart should struggle hard, when they are about to be driven out by the fire of spirituality. The road to the Good is the roughest and steepest in the universe. It is a wonder that so many succeed, no wonder that so many fall. Character has to be established through a thousand stumbles.

I am much refreshed now. I look out of the window and see the huge glaciers just before me and feel that I am in the Himalayas. I am quite calm. My nerves have regained their accustomed strength; and little vexatious, like those you write of, do not touch me at all. How shall I be disturbed by this child's play? The whole world is a mere child's play—preaching, teaching, and all included. "Know him to be the Sannyasin who neither hates nor desires." And what is there to be desired in this little mud-puddle of a world, with its ever-recurring misery, disease, and death? "He who has given up all desires, he alone is happy."

This rest, eternal, peaceful rest, I am catching a glimpse of now in this beautiful spot. "Having once known that the Atman alone, and nothing else, exists, desiring what, or for whose desire, shall you suffer misery about the body?"

I feel as if I had my share of experience, in what they call "work". I am finished, I am longing now to get out. "Out of thousands, but one strives to attain the Goal. And even of those who struggle hard, but few attain; for the senses are powerful, they drag men down."

"A good world", "a happy world", and "social progress", are all terms equally intelligible with "hot ice" or "dark light". If it were good, it would not be the world. The soul foolishly thinks of manifesting the Infinite in finite matter, Intelligence through gross particles; but at last it finds out its error and tries to escape. This going-back is the beginning of religion, and its method, destruction of self, that is, love. Not love for wife or child or anybody else, but love for everything else except this little self. Never be deluded by the tall talk, of which you will hear so much in America, about "human progress" and such stuff. There is *no progress* without corresponding digression. In one society there is one set of evils; in another, another. So with periods of history. In the Middle Ages, there were more robbers, now more cheats. At one period there is less idea of married life; at another, more prostitution. In one, more physical agony; in another, a thousand-fold more mental. So with knowledge. Did not gravitation already exist in Nature before it was observed and named? Then what difference does it make to know that it exists? Are you happier than the Red Indians?

The only knowledge that is of any value is to know that all this is humbug. But few, very few, will ever know this. "Know the Atman alone, and give up all other vain words." This is the only knowledge we gain from all this knocking about the universe. This is the only work, to call upon mankind to "Awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is reached". It is renunciation, Tyâga, that is meant by religion, and nothing else.

Ishvara is the sum total of individuals, yet He Himself also is an individual in the same way as the human body is a unit, of which each cell is an individual. Samashti, or the Collective, is God. Vyashti, or the component, is the soul or Jiva. The existence of Ishvara, therefore, depends on that of Jiva, as the body on the cell, and vice versa. Jiva and Ishvara are co-existent beings. As long as the one exists, the other must also. Again, since in all the higher spheres, except on our earth, the amount of good is vastly in excess of the amount of bad, the sum total, or Ishvara, may be said to be All-good, Almighty, and Omniscient. These are obvious qualities, and need no argument to prove, from the very fact of totality.

Brahman is beyond both of these, and is not a state. It is the only unit not composed of many units. It is the principle which runs through all, from a cell to God, and without which nothing can exist. Whatever is real is that principle or Brahman. When I think "I am Brahman", then I alone exist. It is so also when *you* so think, and so on. Each one is the whole of that principle. . . .

A few days ago, I felt a sudden irresistible desire to write to Kripananda. Perhaps he was unhappy and thinking of me. So I wrote him a warm letter. Today from the American news, I see why it was so. I sent him flowers gathered near the glaciers. Ask Miss Waldo to send him some money and plenty of love. Love never dies. The love of the father never dies, whatever the children may do or be. He is my child. He has the same or more share in my love and help, now that he is in misery.

Yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

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LAKE LUCERNE, SWITZERLAND,
23rd August, 1896.

MY DEAR SHASHI,

Today I received a letter from Ramdayal Babu, in which he writes that many public women attend the Ramakrishna anniversary festival at Dakshineswar, which makes many less inclined to go there. Moreover, in his opinion, one day should be appointed for men and another for women. My decision on the point is this:

1. If public women are not allowed to go to such a great place of pilgrimage as Dakshineswar, where else shall they go to? It is for the sinful that the Lord manifests Himself specially, not so much for the virtuous.

2. Let distinctions of sex, caste, wealth, learning and the whole host of them, which are so many gateways to hell, be confined to the world alone. If such distinctions persist in holy places of pilgrimage, where then lies the difference between them and hell itself?

3. Ours is a gigantic City of Jagannath, where those who have sinned and those who have not, the saintly and the vicious, men and women and children irrespective of age, all have equal rights. That for one day at least in the year

thousands of men and women get rid of the sense of sin and ideas of distinction and sing and hear the name of the Lord is in itself a supreme good.

4. If even in a place of pilgrimage people's tendency to evil be not curbed for one day, the fault lies with you, not them. Create such a huge tidal wave of spirituality that whatever people come near will be swept away.

5. Those who, even in a chapel, would think this is a public woman, that man is of a low caste, a third is poor, and yet another belongs to the masses—the less be the number of such people (whom you call gentlemen, that is), the better. Will they who look to the caste, sex, or profession of Bhaktas appreciate our Lord? I pray to the Lord that hundreds of public women may come and bow their heads at His feet; it does not matter if not one gentleman comes. Come public women, come drunkards, come thieves and all—His Gate is open to all. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." Never let such cruel, demoniacal ideas have a place in your mind.

6. But then some social vigilance is needed. How are we to do that? A few men (old men, preferably) should take charge as the warders for the day. They will make circuits round the scene of the festival, and in case they find any man or woman showing impropriety of speech or conduct, they will at once expel them out of the garden. But so long as they behave like good men and women, they are Bhaktas and are to be respected—be they men or women, honest citizens or unchaste.

I am at present travelling in Switzerland and shall soon go to Germany to see Professor Deussen. I shall return to England from there about the 23rd or 24th September, and the next winter will find me back in my country.

My love to you and all.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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LUCERNE, SWITZERLAND
23rd August, 1896

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I received your last today. By this time you must have received my receipt for £5 you sent. I do not know what membership you mean. I have no objection to have my name to be put on the list of membership of any society. As for Sturdy I do not know what his opinions are. I am now travelling in Switzerland. From hence I go to Germany, then to England, and next winter to India. I am very glad to hear that Saradananda and Goodwin are doing good work in the U.S. As for me, I do not lay any claim to that £500 for any work. I think I have worked enough. I am now going to retire. I have sent for another man from India who will join me next month. I have begun the work, let others work it out. So you see, to set the work going I had to touch money and property for a time. Now I am sure my part of the work *is* done, and I have no more interest in Vedanta or any philosophy in the world or the work itself. I am getting ready to depart to return no more to this hell, this world. Even its religious utility is beginning to pall me. My Mother gather me soon to Herself never to come back any more! These works, and doing good etc. are just a little exercise to cleanse the mind. I had enough of it. This world will be world ever and always. What we are, so we see it. Who works? Whose work? There is no world. It is God Himself. In delusion we call it world. Neither I nor thou nor you—it is all He the Lord, all One. So I do not want anything to do about money matters from this time. It is your money. You spend what comes to you just as you like, and blessings follow you.

Yours in the Lord.
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. I have entire sympathy with the work of Dr. Janes and have written him so. If Goodwin and Saradananda can speed the work in U.S., Godspeed to them. They are in no way bound to me or to Sturdy or to anybody else. It was an awful mistake in the Greenacre programme that it was printed that Saradananda was there by the kind permission (leave of absence from England) of Sturdy. Who is Sturdy or anybody else to *permit* a Sannyasin? Sturdy himself laughed at it and was sorry too. It was a piece of folly. Nothing short of that. It was an insult to Sturdy and would have proved serious for my work if it had reached India. Fortunately I tore all those notices to pieces and threw them into the gutter, and wondered whether it was the celebrated "Yankee" manners the English people delight in talking about. Even so, I am no master to any Sannyasin in this world. They do whatever suits them, and if I can help them—that is all my connection with them. I have given up the bondage of iron, the family tie—I am not to take up the golden chain of religious brotherhood. I am free, must always be free. I wish everyone to be free—free as the air. If New York needs Vedanta, or Boston, or any other place in the U.S., it must receive them and keep them and provide for them. As for me, I am as good as retired. I have played my part in the world.

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SWITZERLAND,
26th August, 1896.

DEAR NANJUNDA RAO,

I have just now got your letter. I am on the move. I have been doing a good deal of mountain-climbing and glacier-crossing in the Alps. Now I am going to Germany. I have an invitation from Prof. Deussen to visit him at Kiel. From thence I go back to England. Possibly I will return to India this winter.

What I objected to in the design for the *Prabuddha Bhârata* was not only its tawdriness, but the crowding in of a number of figures without any purpose. A design should be simple, symbolical, and condensed. I will try to make a design for *Prabuddha Bharata* in London, and send it over to you. . . .

The work is going on beautifully, I am very glad to say. . . . I will give you one advice, however. All combined efforts in India sink under the weight of one iniquity—we have not yet developed strict business principles. Business is business, in the highest sense, and no friendship—or as the Hindu proverb says "eye-shame"—should be there. One should keep the clearest account of everything in one's charge—and never, never apply the funds intended for one thing to any other use whatsoever—even if one starves the next moment. This is business integrity. Next, energy unfailing. Whatever you do let that be your worship for the time. Let this paper be your God for the time, and you will succeed.

When you have succeeded in this paper, start vernacular ones on the same lines in Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, etc. We must reach the masses. The Madrasis are good, energetic, and all that, but the land of Shankarâchârya has lost the spirit of renunciation, it seems.

My children must plunge into the breach, must renounce the world—then the firm foundation will be laid.

Go on bravely—never mind about designs and other details at present—"with the horse will come the reins". Work unto death—I am with you, and when I am gone, my spirit will work with you. This life comes and goes—wealth, fame, enjoyments are only of a few days. It is better, far better to die on the field of duty, preaching the truth, than to die like a worldly worm. Advance!

Yours with all love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

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AIRLIE LODGE, RIDGEWAY GARDENS,
WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND,
17th September, 1896.

DEAR SISTER,[1]

Your very welcome news reached me just now, on my return here from Switzerland. I am very, very happy to learn that at last you have thought it better to change your mind about the felicity of "Old Maids Home". You are perfectly right now —marriage is the truest goal for ninety-nine per cent of the human race, and they will live the happiest life as soon as they have learnt and are ready to abide by the eternal lesson—that we are bound to bear and forbear and that life to every one must be a compromise.

Believe me, dear Harriet, perfect life is a contradiction in terms. Therefore we must always expect to find things not up to our highest ideal. Knowing this, we are bound to make the best of everything. From what I know of you, you have the calm power which bears and forbears to a great degree, and therefore I am safe to prophesy that your married life will be very happy.

All blessings attend you and your *fiancé,* and may the Lord make him always remember what good fortune was his in getting such a wife as you—good, intelligent, loving, and beautiful. I am afraid it is impossible for me to cross the Atlantic so soon. I wish I could to see your marriage.

The best I can do in the circumstances is to quote from one of our books: "May you always enjoy the undivided love of your husband, helping him in attaining all that is desirable in this life, and when you have seen your children's children, and the drama of life is nearing its end, may you help each other in reaching that infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss, at the touch of whose waters all distinctions melt away and we are all one!"[2]

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[1] Miss Harriet Hale.

[2] A reminiscence of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala,* where Kanva gives his benedictions to Shakuntala on the eve of her departure to her husband's place.

"May you be like Umâ, chaste and pure throughout life—may your husband be like Shiva, whose life was in Uma!"

Your loving brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

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AIRLIE LODGE, RIDGEWAY GARDENS,
WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND,
17th September, 1896.

DEAR SISTER,[1]

Today I reached London, after my two months of climbing and walking and glacier seeing in Switzerland. One good it has done me—a few pounds of unnecessary adipose tissue have returned back to the gaseous state. Well, there is no safety even in that, for the solid body of this birth has taken a fancy to outstrip the mind towards infinite expansion. If it goes on this way, I would have soon to lose all personal identity even in the flesh—at least to all the rest of the world.

It is impossible to express my joy in words at the good news contained in Harriet's letter. I have written to her today. I am sorry I cannot come over to see her married, but I will be present in "fine body" with all good wishes and blessings. Well, I am expecting such news from you and the other sisters to make my joy complete. Now, my dear Mary, I will tell you a great lesson I have learnt in this life. It is this: "The higher is your ideal, the more miserable you are"; for such a thing as an ideal *cannot* be attained *in the world*, or in this life even. He who wants perfection in the world is a madman, for it cannot be.

How can you find the infinite in the finite? Therefore I tell you, Harriet will have a most blessed and happy life, because she is not so imaginative and sentimental as to make a fool of herself. She has enough of sentiment as to make life sweet, and enough of common sense and gentleness as to soften the hard points in life which must come to everyone. So has Harriet McKindley in a still higher degree. She is just the girl to make the best of wives, only this world is so full of idiots that very few can penetrate beyond the flesh! As for you and Isabelle, I will tell you the truth, and my "language is plain".

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[1] Miss Mary Hale.

You, Mary, are like a mettlesome Arab—grand, splendid. You will make a splendid queen—physically, mentally. You will shine alongside of a dashing, bold, adventurous heroic husband; but, my dear sister, you will make one of the worst of wives. You will take the life out of our easy-going, practical, plodding husbands of the everyday world. Mind, my sister, although it is true that there is more romance in actual life than in any novel, yet it is few and far between. Therefore my advice to you is that until you bring down your ideals to a more practical level, you ought not to marry. If you do, the result will be misery for both of you. In a few months you will lose all regard for a commonplace, good, nice, young man, and then life will become insipid. As to sister Isabelle, she has the same temperament as you; only this kindergarten has taught her a good lesson of patience and forbearance. Perhaps she will make a good wife.

There are two sorts of persons in the world. The one—strong-nerved, quiet, yielding to nature, not given to much imagination, yet good, kind, sweet, etc. For such is this world; they alone are born to be happy. There are others again with high-strung nerves, tremendously imaginative, with intense feeling, always going high one moment and coming down the next. For them there is no happiness. The first class will have almost an even tenor of happiness; the last will have to run between ecstasy and misery. But of these alone what we call geniuses are made. There is some truth in the recent theory that "genius is a sort of madness".

Now, persons of this class, if they want to be great, must fight to finish—clear out the deck for battle. No encumbrance—no marriage, no children, no undue attachment to anything except the one *idea*, and live and die for that. I am a person of this sort. I have taken up the one idea of "Vedanta" and I have "cleared the deck for action". You and Isabelle are made of this metal; but let me tell you, though it is hard, *you are spoiling your lives in vain.* Either, take up one *idea,* clear the deck, and to it dedicate the life; or be contented and practical; lower the ideal, marry, and have a *happy life.* Either "Bhoga" or "Yoga"—either enjoy this life, or give up and be a Yogi; *none can have both in one.* Now or never, select quick. "He who is very particular gets nothing", says the proverb. Now sincerely and really and for ever determine to "clear the deck for fight", take up anything, philosophy or science or religion or literature, and let that be your God for the rest of your life. Achieve happiness or achieve greatness. I have no sympathy with you and Isabelle; you are neither for this nor for that. I wish to see you happy, as Harriett has well chosen, or *great.* Eating, drinking, dressing, and society nonsense are not things to throw a life upon—especially for you, Mary. You are rusting away a splendid brain and abilities, for which there is not the least excuse. You must have ambition to be great. I know you will take these rather harsh remarks from me in the right spirit knowing I like you really as much or more than what I call you, my sisters. I had long had a mind to tell you this, and as experience is gathering, I feel like telling you. The joyful news from Harriet urged me to tell you this. I will be overjoyed to hear that you are married also and happy, so far as happiness can be had here, or would like to hear of you as doing great deeds.

I had a pleasant visit with Prof. Deussen in Germany. I am sure you have heard of him as the greatest living German philosopher. He and I travelled together to England and today came together to see my friend here with whom I am to stop for the rest of my stay in England. He is very fond of talking Sanskrit and is the only Sanskrit scholar in the West who can talk in it. As he wants to get a practice, he never talks to me in any other language but Sanskrit.

I have come over here amongst my friends, shall work for a few weeks, and then go back to India in the winter.

Ever your loving brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

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14 Grey Coat Gardens,
Westminster, London,
1896.

Dear Alasinga,

I have returned about three weeks from Switzerland but could not write you further before. I have sent you by last mail a paper on Paul Deussen of Kiel. Sturdy's plan about the magazine is still hanging fire. As you see, I have left the St. George's Road place. We have a lecture hall at 39 Victoria Street. C/o E. T. Sturdy will always reach me for a year to come. The rooms at Grey Coat Gardens are only lodgings for self and the other Swami (Abhedananda) taken for three months only. The work in London is growing apace, the classes are becoming bigger as they go on. I have no doubt this will go on increasing at this rate and the English people are steady and loyal. Of course, as soon as I leave, most of this fabric will tumble down. Something will happen. Some strong man will arise to take it up. The Lord knows what is good. In America there is room for twenty preachers on the Vedanta and Yoga. Where to get these preachers, and where also the money to bring them? Half the United States can be conquered in ten years, given a number of strong and genuine men. Where are they? We are all boobies over there! Selfish cowards, with our nonsense of lip-patriotism, orthodoxy, and boasted religious feeling! The Madrasis have more of go and steadiness, but every fool is married. Marriage! Marriage! Marriage! . . . Then the way our boys are married nowadays! . . . It is very good to aspire to be a non-attached householder; but what we want in Madras is not that just now—but non-marriage. . . .

My child, what I want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel, inside which dwells a mind of the same material as that of which the thunderbolt is made. Strength, manhood, Kshatra-Virya + Brahma-Teja. Our beautiful hopeful boys—they have everything, only if they are not slaughtered by the millions at the altar of this brutality they call marriage. O Lord, hear my wails! Madras will then awake when at least one hundred of its very heart's blood, in the form of its educated young men, will stand aside from the world, gird their loins, and be ready to fight the battle of truth, marching on from country to country. One blow struck outside of India is equal to a hundred thousand struck within. Well, all will come if the Lord wills it.

Miss Müller was the person who offered that money I promised. I have told her about your new proposal. She is thinking about it. In the meanwhile I think it is better to give her some work. She has consented to be the agent for the *Brahmavadin* and *Awakened India*. Will you write to her about it? Her address is Airlie Lodge, Ridgeway Gardens, Wimbledon, England. I was living with her over there for the last few weeks. But the London work cannot go on without my living in London. As such I have changed quarters. I am sorry it has chagrined Miss Müller a bit. Cannot help. Her full name is Miss Henrietta Müller. Max Müller is getting very friendly. I am soon going to deliver two lectures at Oxford.

I am busy writing something big on the Vedanta philosophy. I am busy collecting passages from the various Vedas bearing on the Vedanta in its threefold aspect. You can help me by getting someone to collect passages bearing on, first the Advaitic idea, then the Vishishtâdvaitic, and the Dvaitic from the Samhitâs, the Brâhmanas, the Upanishads, and the Purânas. They should be classified and very legibly written with the name and chapter of the book, in each case. It would be a pity to leave the West, without leaving something of the philosophy in book form.

There was a book published in Mysore in Tamil characters comprising all the one hundred and eight Upanishads; I saw it in Professor Deussen's library. Is there a reprint of the same in Devanâgari? If so, send me a copy. If not, send me the Tamil edition, and also write on a sheet the Tamil letters and compounds, and all juxtaposed with its Nagari equivalents. so that I may learn the Tamil letters.

Mr. Satyanathan, whom I met in London the other day, said that there has been a friendly review of my Râja-Yoga book in the *Madras Mail*, the chief Anglo-Indian paper in Madras. The leading physiologist in America, I hear, has been charmed with my speculations. At the same time, there have been some in England who ridiculed my ideas. Good!

My speculations of course are awfully bold; a good deal of them will ever remain meaningless; but there are hints in it which the physiologists had better taken up earlier. Nevertheless, I am quite satisfied with the result. "Let them talk badly of me if they please, but let them talk", is my motto.

In England, of course, they are gentlemen and never talk the rot I had in America. Then again the English missionaries you see over there are nearly all of them from the dissenters. They are not from the gentleman class in England. The gentlemen here, who are religious, all belong to the English Church. The dissenters have very little voice in England and no education. I never hear of those people here against whom you from time to time warn me. They are unknown here and dare not talk nonsense. I hope Ram K. Naidu is already in Madras and you are enjoying good health.

Persevere on, my brave lads. We have only just begun. Never despond! Never say enough! . . . As soon as a man comes over to the West and sees different nations, his eyes open. This way I get strong workers, not by talking, but by practically showing what we have in India and what we have not. I wish at least that a million Hindus had travelled all over the world!

Yours ever with love,
VIVEKANANDA.

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WIMBLEDON,
8th October, 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

. . . I met in Germany Prof. Deussen. I was his guest at Kiel and we travelled together to London and had some very pleasant meetings here. . . . Although I am in full sympathy with the various branches of religious and social work, I find that specification of work is absolutely necessary. Our special branch is to preach *Vedanta.* Helping in other work should be subservient to that one ideal. I hope you will inculcate this in the mind of Saradananda very strongly.

Did you read Max Müller's article on Ramakrishna? . . . Things are working very favourably here in England. The work is not only popular but appreciated.

Yours affly.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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LONDON,
28th October, 1896.

(On the eve of the lecture-tour of Dr. Barrows in India at the end of 1896, Swami Vivekananda in a letter to the *Indian Mirror,* Calcutta, introduced the distinguished visitor to his countrymen and advised them to give him a fitting reception. He wrote among other things as follows:)

Dr. Barrows was the ablest lieutenant Mr. C. Boney could have selected to carry out successfully his great plan of the Congresses at the World's Fair, and it is now a matter of history how one of these Congresses scored a unique distinction under the leadership of Dr. Barrows.

It was the great courage, untiring industry, unruffled patience, and never-failing courtesy of Dr. Barrows that made the Parliament a grand success.

India, its people, and their thoughts have been brought more prominently before the world than ever before, by that wonderful gathering at Chicago, and that national benefit we certainly owe to Dr. Barrows more than to any other man at that meeting.

Moreover, he comes to us in the sacred name of religion, in the name of one of the great teachers of mankind, and I am sure, his exposition of the system of the Prophet of Nazareth would be extremely liberal and elevating. The Christ-power this man intends to bring to India is not that of the intolerant, dominant superior, with heart full of contempt for everything else but its own self, but that of a brother who craves for a brother's place as a co-worker of the various powers already working in India. Above all, we must remember that gratitude and hospitality are the peculiar characteristics of Indian humanity; and as such, I would beg my countrymen to behave in such a manner that this stranger from the other side of the globe may find that in the midst of all our misery, our poverty, and degradation, the heart beats as warm as of yore, when the "wealth of Ind" was the proverb of nations, and India was the land of the "Aryas".

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14 GREYCOAT GARDENS, WESTMINSTER,
LONDON, ENGLAND,
1st November, 1896.

"Gold and silver", my dear Mary,[1] "have I none, but what I have I give to thee" freely, and that is the knowledge that the goldness of gold, the silverness of silver, the manhood of man, the womanhood of woman, the reality of everything is the Lord—and that this Lord we are trying to realize from time without beginning in the objective, and in the attempt throwing up such "queer" creatures of our fancy as man, woman, child, body, mind, the earth, sun, moon, stars, the world, love, hate, property, wealth, etc.; also ghosts, devils, angels and gods, God, etc.

The fact being that the Lord is in us, we are He, the eternal subject, the real ego, never to be objectified, and that all this objectifying process is mere waste of time and talent. When the soul becomes aware of this, it gives up objectifying and falls back more and more upon the subjective. This is the evolution, less and less in the body and more and more in the mind—*man* the highest form, meaning in Sanskrit *manas,* thought—the animal that thinks and not the animal that "senses" only. This is what in theology is called "renunciation". The formation of society, the institution of marriage, the love for children, our good works, morality, and ethics are all different forms of renunciation. All our lives in every society are the subjection of the will, the thirst, the desire. This surrender of the will or the fictitious self—or the desire to jump out of ourselves, as it were—the struggle still to objectify the subject—is the one phenomenon in this world of which all societies and social forms are various modes and stages. Love is the easiest and smoothest way towards the self surrender or subjection of the will, and hatred, the opposite.

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[1] Miss Mary Hale.

People have been cajoled through various stories or superstitions of heavens and hells and Rulers above the sky, towards this one end of self-surrender. The philosopher does the same knowingly without superstition, by giving up desires.

An objective heaven or millennium therefore has existence only in the fancy—but a subjective one is already in existence. The musk-deer after vain search for the cause of the scent of the musk, at last will have to find it in himself.

Objective society will always be a mixture of good and evil—objective life will always be followed by its shadow, death; and the longer the life, the longer will also be the shadow. It is only when the sun is on our own head that *there is no shadow*. When God and good and everything else is in us, there is no evil. In objective life, however, every bullet has its billet—evil goes with every good as its shadow. Every improvement is coupled with an equal degradation. The reason being that good and evil are not two things but one, the difference being only in manifestation—one of degree, not kind.

Our very lives depend upon the death of others—plants or animals or bacilli! The other great mistake we often make is that good is taken as an ever-increasing item, whilst evil is a fixed quantity. From this it is argued that evil being diminished every day, there will come a time when good alone will remain. The fallacy lies in the assumption of a false premiss. If good is increasing, so is evil. My desires have been much more than the desires of the masses among my race. My joys have been much greater than theirs—but my miseries a million times more intense. The same constitution that makes you feel the least touch of good makes you feel the least of evil too. The same nerves that carry sensations of pleasure carry the sensations of pain too—and the same mind feels both. The progress of the world means more enjoyment and more misery too. This mixture of life and death, good and evil, knowledge and ignorance is what is called Mâyâ—or the universal phenomenon. You may go on for eternity inside this net, seeking for happiness—you find much, and much evil too. To have good and no evil is childish nonsense. Two ways are left open—one by giving up all hope to take up the world as it is and bear the pangs and pains in the hope of a crumb of happiness now and then. The other, to give up the search for pleasure, knowing it to be pain in another form and seek for *truth*—and those that dare try for truth succeed in finding that truth as ever present—present in themselves. Then we also discover how the same truth is manifesting itself both in our relative error and knowledge—we find also that the same truth is bliss which again is manifesting itself as good and evil, and with it also we find real existence which is manifesting itself as both death and life.

Thus we realize that all these phenomena are but the reflections, bifurcated or manifolded, of the one existence, truth-bliss-unity—my real Self and the reality of everything else. Then and then only is it possible to do good without evil, for such a soul has known and got the control of the material of which both good and evil are manufactured, and he alone can manifest one or the other as he likes, and we know he manifests only good. This is the Jivan-mukta—the living free—the goal of the Vedanta as of all other philosophies.

Human society is in turn governed by the four castes—the priests, the soldiers, the traders, and the labourers. Each state has its glories as well as its defects. When the priest (Brahmin) rules, there is a tremendous exclusiveness on hereditary grounds; the persons of the priests and their descendants are hemmed in with all sorts of safeguards—none but they have any knowledge—none but they have the right to impart that knowledge. Its glory is, that at this period is laid the foundation of sciences. The priests cultivate the mind, for through the mind they govern.

The military (Kshatriya) rule is tyrannical and cruel, but they are not exclusive; and during that period arts and social culture attain their height.

The commercial (Vaishya) rule comes next. It is awful in its silent crushing and blood-sucking power. Its advantage is, as the trader himself goes everywhere, he is a good disseminator of ideas collected during the two previous states. They are still less exclusive than the military, but culture begins to decay.

Last will come the labourer (Shudra) rule. Its advantages will be the distribution of physical comforts—its disadvantages, (perhaps) the lowering of culture. There will be a great distribution of ordinary education, but extraordinary geniuses will be less and less.

If it is possible to form a state in which the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial, and the ideal of equality of the last can all be kept intact, minus their evils, it will be an ideal state. But is it possible?

Yet the first three have their day. Now is the time for the last—they must have it—none can resist it. I do not know all the difficulties about the gold or silver standards (nobody seems to know much as to that), but this much I see that the gold standard has been making the poor poorer, and the rich richer. Bryan was right when he said, "We refuse to be crucified on a cross of gold". The silver standard will give the poor a better chance in this unequal fight. I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.

The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this one be tried—if for nothing else, for the novelty of the thing. A redistribution of pain and pleasure is better than always the same persons having pains and pleasures. The sum total of good and evil in the world remains ever the same. The yoke will be lifted from shoulder to shoulder by new systems, that is all.

Let every dog have his day in this miserable world, so that after this experience of so-called happiness they may all come to the Lord and give up this vanity of a world and governments and all other botherations.

With love to you all,

Ever your faithful brother,

VIVEKANANDA

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39 VICTORIA ST., LONDON, S.W.,
28th November, 1896.

DEAR SISTERS,[1]

. . . I feel impelled to write a few lines to you before my departure for India. The work in London has been a roaring success. The English are not so bright as the Americans, but once you touch their heart, it is yours for ever. Slowly have I gained, and it is strange that in six months' work altogether I would have a steady class of 120 persons apart from public lectures. Here everyone means work—the practical Englishman. Capt. and Mrs. Sevier and Mr. Goodwin are going to India with me to work and spend their own money on it! There are scores here ready to do the same, men and women of position ready to give up everything for the idea, once they feel convinced! And last, though not the least, the help in the shape of money to start my "work" in India has come and more will follow. My ideas about the English have been revolutionised. I now understand why the Lord has blessed them above all other races. They are steady, sincere to the backbone, with great depths of feeling—only with a crust of stoicism on the surface; if that is broken, you have your man.

Now I am going to start a centre in Calcutta and another in the Himalayas. The Himalayan one will be an entire hill about 7,000 ft. high—cool in summer, cold in winter. Capt. and Mrs. Sevier will live there, and it will be the centre for European workers, as I do not want to kill them by forcing on them the Indian mode of living and the fiery plains. My plan is to send out numbers of Hindu boys to every civilized country to preach—get men and women from foreign countries to work in India. This would be a good exchange. After having established the centres, I go about up and down like the gentlemen in the book of Job.

Here I must end to catch the mail. Things are opening for me. I am glad, and I know so you are. Now all blessings be yours and all happiness.

With eternal love,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] The Hale Sisters.

P.S. What about Dharmapala? What is he doing? Give him my love if you meet him.

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LONDON
13th December, 1896.

DEAR MADAM,[1]

We have only to grasp the idea of gradation of morality and everything becomes clear.

Renunciation—non-resistance—non-destructiveness—are the ideals to be attained through less and less worldliness, less and less resistance, less and less destructiveness. Keep the ideal in view and work towards it. None can live in the world without resistance, without destruction, without desire. The world has not come to that state yet when the ideal can be realized in society.

The progress of the world through all its evils is making it fit for the ideals, slowly but surely. The majority will have to go on with this slow growth—the exceptional ones will have to get out to realize the idea in the present state of things.

Doing the duty of the time is the best way, and if it is done only as a duty, it does not make us attached.

Music is the highest art and, to those who understand, is the highest worship.

We must try our best to destroy ignorance and evil. Only we have to learn that evil is destroyed by the growth of good.

Yours faithfully,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] An American lady.

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HOTEL MINERVA, FLORENCE,
20th December, 1896.

DEAR RAKHAL,

As you see, by this time I am on my way. Before leaving London I got your letter and the pamphlet. Take no heed of Mazoomdar's madness. He surely has gone crazy with jealousy. Such foul language as he has used would only make people laugh at him in a civilized country. He has defeated his purpose by the use of such vulgar words.

All the same, we ought not to allow Hara Mohan or any one else to go and fight Brahmos and others in our name. The public must know that we have no quarrel with any sect; and if anybody provokes a quarrel, he is doing it on his own responsibility. Quarrelling and abusing each other are our national traits. Lazy, useless, vulgar, jealous, cowardly, and quarrelsome—that is what we are, Bengalis. Any one who wants to be my friend must give up these. Neither do you allow Hara Mohan to print any book, because such printing as he does is only cheating the public.

If there are oranges in Calcutta send a hundred to Madras care of Alasinga, so that I may have them when I reach Madras.

Mazoomdar writes that the Sayings of Shri Ramakrishna published in *The Brahmavadin* are not geunine and are lies! In that case ask Suresh Datta and Ram Babu to give him the lie in *The Indian Mirror*. As I did not do anything about the collection of the Uktis (sayings), I cannot say anything.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Don't mind these fools; "No fool like an old fool" is the proverb. Let them bark a little. Their occupation is gone. Poor souls! Let them have a little satisfaction in barking.

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DAMPFER, 'PRINZ-REGENT LEOPOLD',
3rd January, 1897.

DEAR MARY,

I received your letter forwarded from London in Rome. It was very very kind of you to write such a beautiful letter, and I enjoyed every bit of it. I do not know anything about the evolution of the orchestra in Europe. We are nearing Port Said after four days of frightfully bad sailing from Naples. The ship is rolling as hard as she can, and you must pardon my scrawls under such circumstances.

From Suez begins Asia. Once more Asia. What am I? Asiatic, European, or American? I feel a curious medley of personalities in me. You didn't write anything about Dharmapala, his goings and doings. I am much more interested in him than in Gandhi.

I land in a few days at Colombo and mean to "do" Ceylon a bit. There was a time when Ceylon had more than 20 million inhabitants and a huge capital of which the ruins cover nearly a hundred square miles!

The Ceylonese are not Dravidians but pure Aryans. It was colonised from Bengal about 800 B.C., and they have kept a very clear history of their country from that time. It was the greatest trade centre of the ancient world, and Anuradhapura was the London of the Ancients.

I enjoyed Rome more than anything in the West, and after seeing Pompeii I have lost all regard for the so-called "Modern Civilization". With the exception of steam and electricity they had everything else and infinitely more art conceptions and executions than the Moderns.

Please tell Miss Locke that I was mistaken when I told her that sculpturing of the human figure was not developed in India as among the Greeks. I am reading in Fergusson and other authorities that in Orissa or Jagannath, which I did not visit, there are among the ruins human figures which for beauty and anatomical skill would compare with any production of the Greeks. There is a colossal figure of Death, a huge female skeleton covered with a shrivelled skin—the awful fidelity to anatomical details are frightening and disgusting. Says my author, one of the female figures in the niche is exactly like the Venus de Medici, and so on. But you must remember that everything almost has been destroyed by the iconoclastic Mohammedan; yet the remnants are more than all European debris put together! I have travelled eight years and not seen many of the masterpieces.

Tell Sister Locke also that there is a ruined temple in a forest in India, which and the Parthenon of Greece, Fergusson considers as the climax of architectural art—each of its type—the one of conception, the other of conception and detail. The later Mogul buildings etc., the Indo-Saracenic architecture, does not compare a bit with the best types of the ancients. . . .

With all my love,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Just by chance saw Mother Church and Father Pope at Florence. You know of it already.

144*

ओं तत् सत्

ROSE BANK,
THE MAHARAJA OF BURDWAN'S HOUSE,
DARJEELING,
6th April, 1897.

HONOURED MADAM,[1]

I feel much obliged for the *Bhârati* sent by you, and consider myself fortunate that the cause to which my humble life has been dedicated has been able to win the approbation of highly talented ladies like you.

In this battle of life, men are rare who encourage the initiator of new thought, not to speak of women who would offer him encouragement, particularly in our unfortunate land. It is therefore that the approbation of an educated Bengali lady is more valuable than the loud applause of all the men of India.

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[1] Shrimati Sarala Ghoshal—Editor, *Bhârati*.

May the Lord grant that many women like you be born in this country, and devote their lives to the betterment of their motherland!

I have something to say in regard to the article you have written about me in the *Bharati*. It is this. It has been for the good of India that religious preaching in the West has been and will be done. It has ever been my conviction that we shall not be able to rise unless the Western people come to our help. In this country no appreciation of merit can yet be found, no financial strength, and what is most lamentable of all, there is not a bit of practicality.

There are many things to be done, but means are wanting in this country. We have brains, but no hands. We have the doctrine of Vedanta, but we have not the power to reduce it into practice. In our books there is the doctrine of universal equality, but in work we make great distinctions. It was in India that unselfish and disinterested work of the most exalted type was preached, but in practice *we* are awfully cruel, awfully heartless—unable to think of anything besides our own mass-of-flesh bodies.

Yet it is only through the present state of things that it is possible to proceed to work. There is no other way. Every one has the power to judge of good and evil, but he is the hero who undaunted by the waves of Samsâra—which is full of errors, delusions, and miseries—with one hand wipes the tears, and with the other, unshaken, shows the path of deliverance. On the one hand there is the conservative society, like a mass of inert matter; on the other, the restless, impatient, fire-darting reformer; the way to good lies between the two. I heard in Japan that it was the belief of the girls of that country that their dolls would be animated if they were loved with all their heart. The Japanese girl never breaks her doll. O you of great fortune! I too believe that India will awake again if anyone could love with all his heart the people of the country—bereft of the grace of affluence, of blasted fortune, their discretion totally lost, downtrodden, ever-starved, quarrelsome, and envious. Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-hearted men and women, giving up all desires of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost, for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen who are gradually sinking lower and lower in the vortex of destitution and ignorance. I have experienced even in my insignificant life that good motives, sincerity, and infinite love can conquer the world. One single soul possessed of these virtues can destroy the dark designs of millions of hypocrites and brutes.

My going to the West again is yet uncertain; if I go, know that too will be for India. Where is the strength of men in this country? Where is the strength of money? Many men and women of the West are ready to do good to India by serving even the lowest Chandâlas, in the Indian way, and through the Indian religion. How many such are there in this country? And financial strength! To meet the expenses of my reception, the people of Calcutta made me deliver a lecture, and sold tickets! I do not blame nor censure anybody for this, I only want to show that our well-being is impossible without men and money coming from the West.

Ever grateful and ever praying to the Lord for your welfare.

VIVEKANANDA.

145*

DARJEELING,
20th April, 1897.

DEAR SHASHI,

All of you have doubtless reached Madras by this time. I should think Biligiri is certainly taking great care of you and that Sadananda serves you as your attendant. In Madras the worship should be done in a completely Sâttvika manner, without a trace of Rajas in it. I hope Alasinga has by now returned to Madras. Don't enter into wrangles with anybody—always maintain a calm attitude. For the present let the worship of Shri Ramakrishna be established and continued in the house of Biligiri. But see that the worship does not become very elaborate and long. Time thus saved should be utilized in holding classes and doing some preaching. It is good to initiate as many as you can. Supervise the work of the two papers, and help in whatever way you can. Biligiri has two widowed daughters. Kindly educate them and make special efforts that through them more such widowed women get a thorough grounding in their own religion, and learn a little English and Sanskrit. But all this work should be done from a distance. One has to be exceedingly careful before young women. Once you fall, there is no way out, and the sin is unpardonable.

I am very sorry to hear that Gupta was bitten by a dog; but I hear that the dog was not a mad one, so there is no cause for alarm. In any case, see that he takes the medicine sent by Gangadhar.

Early morning, finish daily your worship and other duties briefly, and calling together Biligiri with his family, read before them the Gita and other sacred books. There is not the least necessity for teaching the divine Love of Râdhâ and Krishna. Teach them pure devotion to Sitâ-Râm and Hara-Pârvati. See that no mistake is made in this respect. Remember that the episodes of the divine relationship between Radha and Krishna are quite unsuitable for young minds. Specially Biligiri and other followers of Ramanujacharya are worshippers of Rama; so see to it that their innate attitude of pure devotion is never disturbed.

In the evenings give some spiritual teaching like that to the general public. Thus gradually "even the mountain is crossed".

See that an atmosphere of perfect purity is always maintained, and that there enters not the slightest trace of Vâmâchâra. For the rest, the Lord Himself will guide you, there is no fear. Give to Biligiri my respectful salutations and loving greetings and convey my salutations to similar devotees.

My illness is now much less—it may even be cured completely, if the Lord wills. My love, blessings, and greetings to you.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Please tender my specially affectionate greetings and blessings to Dr. Nanjunda Rao and help him as much as you can. Try your best to particularly encourage the study of Sanskrit among the non-Brahmins.

V.

146*

C/o M. N. Banerjee, Esq.,
Darjeeling,
24th April, 1897.

Dear Madam,[1]

In reply to your question about the method of work. the most important thing I have to say is, that the work should be started on a scale which would be commensurate with the results desired. I have heard much of your liberal mind, patriotism, and steady perseverance from my friend Miss Müller, and the proof of your erudition is evident. I look upon it as great good fortune that you are desirous to know what little this insignificant life has been able to attempt; I shall state it in this short letter, as far as I can. But first I shall lay before you my mature convictions for your deliberation.

We have been slaves for ever, i.e. it has never been given to the masses in India to express the inner light which is their inheritance. The Occident has been rapidly advancing towards freedom for the last few centuries. In India, it was the king who used to prescribe everything, from Kulinism down to what one should eat and one should not. In Western countries, the people do everything themselves.

The king now has nothing to say to any social matter; on the other hand, the Indian people have not yet even the least faith in themselves, what to say of self-reliance. The faith in one's own Self, which is the basis of Vedanta, has not yet been even slightly carried into practice. It is for this reason the Western method—i.e. first of all discussion about the wished-for end, then the carrying it out by the combination of all the forces—is of no avail even now in this country; it is for this reason we appear so greatly conservative under foreign rule. If this be true, then it is a vain attempt to do any great work by means of public discussion. "There is no chance of a headache where there is no head"—where is the public? Besides, we are so devoid of strength that our whole energy is exhausted if we undertake to discuss anything; none is left for work. It is for this reason, I suppose, we observe in Bengal almost always "Much cry and little wool". Secondly, as I have written before, I do not expect anything from the rich people of India. It is best to work among the youth in whom lies our hope—patiently, steadily, and without noise.

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[1] Shrimati Sarala Ghoshal—Editor, *Bhârati*.

Now about work. From the day when education and culture, etc., began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilization as of Western countries and the ancient civilization as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, i.e. by spreading education among the masses. A great fuss has been made for half a century about social reform. Travelling through various places of India these last ten years, I observed the country full of social reform associations. But I did not find one association for them by sucking whose blood the people known as "gentlemen" have become and continued to be gentlemen! How many sepoys were brought by the Mussulmans? How many Englishmen are there? Where except in India can be had millions of men who will cut the throats of their own fathers and brothers for six rupees? Sixty millions of Mussulmans in seven hundred years of Mohammedan rule, and two millions of Christians in hundred years of Christian rule—what makes it so? Why has originality entirely forsaken the country? Why are our deft-fingered artisan daily becoming extinct, unable to compete with the Europeans? By what power again has the German labourer succeeded in shaking the many-century-grounded firm footing of the English labourer?

Education, education, education alone! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people, and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. Through education comes faith in one's own self, and through faith in one's own self the inherent Brahman is waking up in them, while the Brahman in us is gradually becoming dormant. In New York I used to observe the Irish colonists come—downtrodden, haggard-looking, destitute of all possessions at home, penniless, and wooden-headed—with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at the end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their eyes. A different spectacle in six months—the man walks upright; his attire is changed. In his eyes and steps there is no more sign of fright. What is the cause? Our Vedanta says that that Irishman was kept surrounded by contempt in his own country—the whole of Nature was telling him with one voice—"Pat, you have no more hope, you were born a slave and will remain so". Having been thus told from his birth. Pat believed in it and hypnotised himself that he was very low, and the Brahman in him shrank away. While no sooner had he landed in America than the shout went up on all sides—"Pat, you are a man as we are, it is man who has done all, a man like you and me can do everything; have courage!" Pat raised his head and saw that it was so, the Brahman within woke up, Nature herself spoke, as it were, "Arise, awake, etc." (Katha Upanishad, I, iii. 4).

Likewise the education that our boys receive is very negative. The schoolboy learns nothing, but has everything of his own broken down—want of Shraddhâ (faith) is the result. The Shraddha which is the keynote of the Vedas and the Vedanta—the Shraddha which emboldened Nachiketa to face Yama and question him, through which Shraddha this world moves—the annihilation of that Shraddha! अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति —"The ignorant, the man devoid of Shraddha, the doubting self runs to ruin." Therefore are we so near destruction. The remedy now is, the spread of education. First of all, Self-knowledge. I do not mean thereby, matted hair, staff, Kamandalu, and mountain caves which the word suggests. What do I mean then? Cannot the knowledge, by which is attained even freedom from the bondage of worldly existence, bring ordinary material prosperity? Certainly it can. Freedom, dispassion, renunciation—all these are the very highest ideals, but स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् —"Even a little of this Dharma saves one from the great fear (of birth and death)". Dualist, qualified Monist, Monist, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shâkta, even the Buddhist and the Jain and others—whatever sects have arisen in India are all at one in this respect, that infinite power is latent in this Jivâtmâ (individualised soul); from the ant to the perfect man there is the same Atman in all, the difference being only in manifestation. "As a farmer breaks the obstacles (to the course of water)" (Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, Kaivalyapâda, 3). That power manifests as soon as it gets the opportunity and the right place and time. From the highest god to the meanest grass, the same power is present in all—whether manifested or not. We shall have to call forth that power by going from door to door.

Secondly, along with this, education has to be imparted. That is easy to say, but how to reduce it into practice? There are thousands of unselfish, kind-hearted men in our country, who have renounced everything. In the same way as they travel about and give religious instructions without any remuneration, so at least half of them can be trained as teachers or bearers of such education as we need most. For that, we want first of all a centre in the capital of each Presidency, from whence to spread slowly throughout the whole of India. Two centres have recently been started in Madras and Calcutta, there is hope of more soon. Then, the greater part of the education to the poor should be given orally, time is not yet ripe for schools. Gradually in these main centres will be taught agriculture, industry, etc., and workshops will be established for the furtherance of arts. To sell the manufactures of those workshops in Europe and America, associations will be started like those already in existence. It will be necessary to start centres for women exactly like those for men. But you are aware how difficult that is in this country. Again, "The snake which bites must take out its own poison"—and that this is going to be my firm conviction; the money required for these works would hove to come from the West. And for that reason our religion should be preached in Europe and America. Modern science has undermined the basis of religions like Christianity. Over and above that, luxury is about to kill the religious instinct itself. Europe and America are looking towards India with expectant eyes—this is the time for philanthropy, this is the time to occupy the hostile strongholds.

In the West, women rule; all influence and power are theirs. If bold and talented women like yourself, versed in Vedanta, go to England to preach, I am sure that every year hundreds of men and women will become blessed by adopting the religion of the land of Bharata. The only woman who went over from our country was Ramâbâi; her knowledge of English, Western science, and art was limited; still she surprised all. If anyone like you go, England will be stirred, what to speak of America! If an Indian woman in Indian dress preach the religion which fell from the lips of the Rishis of India—I see a prophetic vision—there will rise a great wave which will inundate the whole Western world. Will there be no woman, in the land of Maitreyi, Khanâ, Lilâvati, Sâvitri, and Ubhayabhârati, who will venture to do this? The Lord knows. England we shall conquer, England we shall possess through the power of spirituality: नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय —"There is no other way of salvation". Can salvation ever come by getting up meetings and societies? Our conquerors must be made Devas by the powers of our spirituality. I am a humble mendicant, an itinerant monk; I am helpless and alone; what can I do? You have the power of wealth, intellect and education; will you forgo this opportunity? Conquest of England, Europe, and America—this should be our one supreme Mantra at present, in it lies the well-being of the country. Expansion is the sign of life, and we must spread over the world with our spiritual ideals. Alas! this frame is poor, moreover, the physique of a Bengali; even under this labour a fatal disease has attacked it, but there is the hope:

उत्पत्स्यतेऽस्ति मम कोऽपिसमानधर्मा ।
कालो ह्ययं निरवधिर्विपुला च पृथ्वी ॥ (भवभूतिः)

—"A kindred spirit is or will be born out of the limitless time and populous earth to accomplish the work."

About vegetarian diet I have to say this: first, my Master was a vegetarian; but if he was given meat offered to the Goddess, he used to hold it up to his head. The taking of life is undoubtedly sinful, but so long as vegetable food is not made suitable to the human system, through progress in chemistry, there is no alternative but meat-eating. So long as man shall have to live a Râjasika (active) life under circumstances like the present, there is no other way except through meat-eating. It is true that the Emperor Ashoka saved the lives of millions of animals by the threat of the sword, but is not the slavery of a thousand years more dreadful than that? Taking the life of a few goats as against the inability to protect the honour of one's own wife and daughter, and to save the morsels for one's children from robbing hands —which of these is more sinful? Rather let those belonging to the upper ten, who do not earn their livelihood by manual labour, not take meat; but the forcing of vegetarianism upon those who have to earn their bread by labouring day and night, is one of the causes of the loss of our national freedom. Japan is an example of what good and nourishing food can do. May All-powerful Vishveshvari inspire your heart!

VIVEKANANDA.

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ALAMBAZAR MATH,
CALCUTTA,
5th May, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS NOBLE,

Your very very kind, loving, and encouraging letter gave me more strength than you think of.

There are moments when one feels entirely despondent no doubt—especially when one has worked towards an ideal during a whole life's time and just when there is a bit of hope of seeing it partially accomplished, there comes a tremendous thwarting blow. I do not care for the disease, but what depresses me is that my ideals have not had yet the least opportunity of being worked out. And you know the difficulty is money.

The Hindus are making processions and all that, but they cannot give money. The only help I got in the world was in England, from Miss Müller and Mr. Sevier. I thought there that a thousand pounds were sufficient to start at least the principal centre in Calcutta, but my calculation was from the experience of Calcutta ten or twelve years ago. Since then the prices have gone up three or four times.

The work has been started anyhow. A rickety old little house has been rented for six or seven shillings where about twenty-four young men are being trained. I had to go to Darjeeling for a month to recover my health, and I am glad to tell you, I am very much better, and would you believe it, without taking any medicine, only by the exercise of mental healing. I am going again to another hill-station tomorrow, as it is very hot in the plains. Your society is still living, I am sure. I will send you a report, at least every month, of all, I hear, and that was the main reason why I would not come to England just now, although some of our Râjâs going for the Jubilee tried their best to get me with them, as I would have to work hard again to revive the interest in Vedanta. And that would mean a good deal more trouble physically.

I may come over for a month or so very soon however. Only if I could see my work started here, how gladly and freely would I travel about!

So far about work. Now about you personally. Such love and faith and devotion and appreciation like yours, dear Miss Noble, repays a hundred times over any amount of labour one undergoes in this life. May all blessings be yours. My whole life is at your service, as we may say in our mother tongue.

It never was and never will be anything but very very welcome, any letters from you and other friends in England. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond wrote two very kind and nice letters and Mr. Hammond a beautiful poem in the *Brahmavadin*, although I did not deserve it a bit. I will write to you again from the Himalayas, where thought will be clear in sight of the snows and the nerves more settled than in this burning plain. Miss Müller is already in Almora. Mr. and Mrs. Sevier go to Simla. They have been in Darjeeling so long. So things come and go, dear friend. Only the Lord is unchangeable and He is Love. May He make your heart His eternal habitation is the constant prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.

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ALAMBAZAR MATH,
CALCUTTA,
5th May, 1897.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I have been to Darjeeling for a month to recuperate my shattered health. I am very much better now. The disease disappeared altogether in Darjeeling. I am going tomorrow to Almora, another hill-station, to perfect this improvement.

Things are looking not very hopeful here as I have already written you—though the whole nation has risen as one man to honour me and people went almost mad over me! The practical part cannot be had in India. Again, the price of the land has gone up very much near Calcutta. My idea at present is to start three centres at three capitals. These would be my normal schools, from thence I want to invade India.

India is already Ramakrishna's whether I live a few years more or not.

I had a very kind letter from Prof. Janes in which he points out my remarks about degraded Buddhism. You also write that Dharmapala is very wroth about it. Mr. Dharmapala is a good man and I love him, but it would be entirely wrong for him to go into fits over things Indian.

I am perfectly convinced that what they call Modern Hinduism with all its ugliness is only stranded Buddhism. Let the Hindus understand this clearly, and then it would be easier for them to reject it without murmur. As for the ancient form which the Buddha preached, I have the greatest respect for it, as well as for His person. And you well know that we Hindus worship Him as an Incarnation. Neither is the Buddhism of Ceylon any good. My visit to Ceylon has entirely disillusioned me, and the only living people there are the Hindus. The Buddhists are all much Europeanised—even Mr. Dharmapala and his father had European names, which they have since changed. The only respect the Buddhists pay to their great tenet of non-killing is by opening "butcher-stalls" in every place! And the priests encourage this. The real Buddhism I once thought of, would yet do *much good*. But I have given up the idea entirely, and I clearly see the reason why Buddhism was driven out of India, and we will only be too glad if the Ceylonese carry off the remnant of this religion with its hideous idols and licentious rites.

About the Theosophists, you must remember first that in India Theosophists and Buddhists are nonentities. They publish a few papers and make a lot of splash and try to catch Occidental ears. . . .

I was one man in America and another here. Here the whole nation is looking upon me as their authority—there I was a much reviled preacher. Here princes draw my carriage, there I would not be admitted to a decent hotel. My utterances here, therefore, must be for the good of the race, my people—however unpleasant they might appear to a few. Acceptance, love, toleration for everything sincere and honest, but never for hypocrisy. The —s tried to fawn upon and flatter me as I am the authority now in India, and therefore it was necessary for me to stop my work giving any sanction to their humbugs, by a few bold, decisive words, and the thing is done. I am very glad. If my health had permitted, I would have cleared India by this time of these upstart humbugs, at least tried my best. . . . Let me tell you that India is already Ramakrishna's, and for a purified Hinduism I have organized my work here a bit.

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

149*

ALMORA,
30th May, 1897.

DEAR SIR,[1]

I hear some unavoidable domestic grief has come upon you. To you, a man of wisdom, what can this misery do? Yet the amenities of friendly intercourse, incidental to relative existence in this world, require my making mention of it. Those moments of grief, however, very often bring out a better spiritual realization. As if for a while the clouds withdraw and the sun of truth shines out. In the case of some, half of the bondage is loosened. Of all bondages the greatest is that of position—the concern for reputation is stronger than the fear of death; but even this bondage appears to relax a little. As if the mind sees for a moment that it is much better to listen to the indwelling Lord than to the opinions of men. But again the clouds close up and this indeed is Mâyâ.

Though for a long time I had no direct correspondence with you, yet I have often been receiving from others almost all the news about you. Some time ago you kindly sent me to England a copy of a translation of the Gita. The cover bore only a line of your handwriting. The few words in my acknowledgment of this gift, I am told, raised doubts in your mind about my old affection towards you.

Please know these doubts to be groundless. The reason of that laconic acknowledgment is that I was given to see, during four or five years, only that one line of your handwriting on the cover of an English Gita, from which fact I thought, if you had no leisure to write more, would you have leisure enough to read much? Secondly, I learnt, you were particularly the friend of white-skinned missionaries of the Hindu religion and the roguish black natives were repelling! There was apprehension on this score. Thirdly, I am a Mlechchha, Shudra, and so forth, I eat anything and everything, and with anybody and everybody—and that in public both abroad and here. In my views, besides, much perversion has supervened—one attributeless absolute Brahman, I see, I fairly understand, and I see in some particular individuals the special manifestations of that Brahman; if those individuals are called by the name of God, I can well follow—otherwise the mind does not feel inclined towards intellectual theorisings such as the postulated Creator and the like.

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[1] This is the last letter written to Babu Pramada Das Mitra. It is a bold challenge to the old love and spiritual fellowship of the two representative minds of that age, and as such, Swamiji states his own case in it in all its extreme trend and tendency so as to demand of his correspondent a sincere depth of love and of the power to harmonise.

Such a God I have seen in my life, and his commands I live to follow. The Smritis and the Puranas are productions of men of limited intelligence and are full of fallacies, errors, the feelings of class, and malice. Only parts of them breathing broadness of spirit and love are acceptable, the rest are to be rejected. The Upanishads and the Gita are the true scriptures—Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, and so on are the true Avatâras, for they had their hearts broad as the sky—and above all, Ramakrishna. Ramanuja, Shankara, and others seem to have been mere Pundits with much narrowness of heart. Where is that love, that weeping heart at the sorrow of others?—Dry pedantry of the Pundits—and the feeling of only oneself getting to salvation hurry-scurry! But is that going to be possible, sir? Was it ever likely or will it ever be so? Can anything be attained with any shred of "I" left anyhow?

Another great discrepancy: the conviction is daily gaining on my mind that the idea of caste is the greatest dividing factor and the root of Maya; all caste either on the principle of birth or of merit is bondage. Some friends advise, "True, lay all that at heart, but outside, in the world of relative experience, distinctions like caste must needs be maintained." . . . The idea of oneness at heart (with a craven impotence of effort, that is to say), and outside, the hell-dance of demons—oppression and persecution—ay, the dealer of death to the poor; but if the Pariah be wealthy enough, "Oh, he is the protector of religion!"

Over and above, I come to see from my studies that the disciplines of religion are not for the Shudra; if he exercises any discrimination about food or about going out to foreign lands, it is all useless in his case, only so much labour lost. I am a Shudra, a Mlechchha, so I have nothing to do with all that botheration. To me what would Mlechchha's food matter or Pariah's? It is in the books written by priests that madnesses like that of caste are to be found, and not in books revealed from God. Let the priests enjoy the fruits of their ancestors' achievement, while I follow the word of God, for my good lies there.

Another truth I have realized is that altruistic service only is religion, the rest, such as ceremonial observances, are madness—even it is wrong to hanker after one's own salvation. Liberation is only for him who gives up everything for others, whereas others who tax their brains day and night harping on "my salvation", "my salvation", wander about with their true well-being ruined, both present and prospective; and this I have seen many a time with my own eyes. Reflecting on all these sundry matters, I had no heart for writing a letter to you. If notwithstanding all these discrepancies you find your attachment for me intact, I shall feel it to be a very happy issue indeed.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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ALMORA,
1st June, 1897.

DEAR MR.——,

The objections you show about the Vedas would be valid if the word Vedas meant Samhitâs. The word Vedas includes the three parts, the Samhitas, the Brâhmanas, and the Upanishads, according to the universally received opinion in India. Of these, the first two portions, as being the ceremonial parts, have been nearly put out of sight; the Upanishads have alone been taken up by all our philosophers and founders of sects.

The idea that the Samhitas are the only Vedas is very recent and has been started by the late Swami Dayânanda. This opinion has not got any hold on the orthodox population.

The reason of this opinion was that Swami Dayananda thought he could find a consistent theory of the whole, based on a new interpretation of the Samhitas, but the difficulties remained the same, only they fell back on the Brahmanas. And in spite of the theories of interpretation and interpolation a good deal still remains.

Now if it is possible to build a consistent religion on the Samhitas, it is a thousand times more sure that a very consistent and harmonious faith can be based upon the Upanishads, and moreover, here one has not to go against the already received national opinion. Here all the Achâryas (Teachers) of the past would side with you, and you have a vast scope for new progress.

The Gita no doubt has already become the Bible of Hinduism, and it fully deserves to be so; but the personality of Krishna has become so covered with haze that it is impossible today to draw any life-giving inspiration from that *life*. Moreover, the present age requires new modes of thought and new life.

Hoping this will help you in thinking along these lines.

I am yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

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ALMORA,
2nd June, 1897.

DEAR MARIE,

I begin here my promised big chatty letter with the best intention as to its growth, and if it fails, it will be owing to your own Karma. I am sure you are enjoying splendid health. I have been very, very bad indeed; now recovering a bit—hope to recover very soon.

What about the work in London? I am afraid it is going to pieces. Do you now and then visit London? Hasn't Sturdy got a new baby?

The plains of India are blazing now. I cannot bear it. So I am here in this hill-station—a bit cooler than the plains.

I am living in a beautiful garden belonging to a merchant of Almora—a garden abutting several miles of mountains and forests. Night before last a leopard came here and took away a goat from the flock kept in this garden. It was a frightful din the servants made and the barking of the big Tibet watch-dogs. These dogs are kept chained at a distance all night since I am here, so that they may not disturb my sleep with their deep barks. The leopard thus found his opportunity and got a decent meal, perhaps, after weeks. May it do much good to him!

Do you remember Miss Müller? She has come here for a few days and was rather frightened when she heard of the leopard incident. The demand for tanned skins in London seems very great, and that is playing havoc with our leopards and tigers more than anything else.

As I am writing to you, before me, reflecting the afternoon's glow, stand long, long lines of huge snow peaks. They are about twenty miles as the crow flies from here, and forty through the circuitous mountain roads.

I hope your translations have been well received in the Countess's paper. I had a great mind and very good opportunity of coming over to England this Jubilee season with some of our princes, but my physicians would not allow me to venture into work so soon. For going to Europe means work, isn't it? No work, no bread.

Here the yellow cloth is sufficient and I would have food enough. Anyhow I am taking a much desired rest, hope it will do me good.

How are you going on with your work? With joy or sorrow? Don't you like to have a good rest, say for some years, and no work? Sleep, eat, and exercise; exercise, eat and sleep—that is what I am going to do some months yet. Mr. Goodwin is with me. You ought to have seen him in his Indian clothes. I am very soon going to shave his head and make a full-blown monk of him.

Are you still practising some of the Yogas? Do you find any benefit from them? I learn that Mr. Martin is dead. How is Mrs. Martin—do you see her now and then?

Do you know Miss Noble? Do you ever see her? Here my letter comes to an end, as a huge dust storm is blowing over me and it is impossible to write. It is all your Karma, dear Marie, for I intended to write so many wonderful things and tell you such fine stories; but I will have to keep them for the future, and you will have to wait.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

152

ALMORA,
3rd June, 1897.

DEAR MISS NOBLE,

. . . As for myself I am quite content. I have roused a good many of our people and that was all I wanted. Let things have their course, and Karma its way. I have no bonds here below. I have seen life, and it is all self—life is for self, love for self, honour for self, everything for self. I look back and scarcely find any action I have done for self—even my wicked deeds were not for self. So I am content; not that I feel I have done anything specially good or great, but the world is so little, life so mean a thing, existence so, so servile—that I wonder and smile that human beings, rational souls, should be running after this self—so mean and detestable a prize.

This is the truth. We are caught in a trap, and the sooner one gets out, the better for one. I have seen the truth—let the body float up or down, who cares?

It is a beautiful mountain park I am living in now. On the north, extending almost all along the horizon, are peak after peak of the snow-clad Himalayas—forests abounding. It is not cold here, neither very warm; the evenings and mornings are simply delicious. I should like to be here this summer, and when the rains set in, I go down to the plains to work.

I was born for the life of a scholar—retired, quiet, poring over my books. But the Mother dispenses otherwise—yet the tendency is there.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

153*

ALMORA,
15th June, 1897.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am getting detailed reports of you and getting more and more delighted. It is that sort of work which can conquer the world. What do differences of sect and opinion matter? Bravo! Accept a hundred thousand embraces and blessings from me. Work, work, work—I care for nothing else. Work, work, work, even unto death! Those that are weak must make themselves great workers, great heroes—never mind money, it will drop from the heavens. Let them whose gifts you will accept, give in their own name if they like, no harm. Whose name, and what is it worth? Who cares for name? Off with it! If in the attempt to carry morsels of food to starving mouths, name, and possession, and all be doomed even—अहो भाग्यमहो भाग्यम्—thrice blessed art thou! It is the heart, the heart, that conquers, not the brain. Books and learning, Yoga and meditation and illumination—all are but dust compared with love. It is love that gives you the supernatural powers, love that gives you Bhakti, love that gives illumination, and love, again, that leads to emancipation. This indeed is worship, worship of the Lord in the human tabernacle, नेदं यदिदमुपासते —"not this that people worship".[1] This is but the beginning, and unless we spread over the whole of India, nay, the whole earth, in that way, where lies the greatness of our Lord!

Let people see whether or not the touch of our Lord's feet confers divinity on man! It is this that is called liberation-in-life—when the last trace of egoism and selfishness is gone. Well done! Glory to the Lord! Gradually try to spread. If you can, go to Calcutta, and raise a fund with the help of another band of boys; set one or two of them to work at some place, and begin somewhere else. Spread in that way, and go on inspecting them. You will see that the work will gradually become permanent, and spread of religion and education will follow as a matter of course. I have given particular instructions to them in Calcutta. Do that kind of work, and I shall carry you on my shoulders—bravo! You will see that by degrees every district will become a centre—and that a permanent one. I am soon going down to the plains. I am a fighter and shall die in the battlefield. Does it behove me to sit up here like a zenana lady?

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[1] That is, things other than God.

Yours with all love,
VIVEKANANDA.

154*

ALMORA,
30th June, 1897.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

According to your suggestions, I write a letter to Mr. Levinge, the District Magistrate. Besides, you will write a big letter to the *Indian Mirror,* describing in detail his method of work (having got the same revised by Dr. Shashi), and send a copy of it to the gentleman named above. Our fools only search for people's shortcomings. Let them see some virtues too.

I am leaving this place next Monday. . . .

What do you talk of the difficulty in getting orphans? Better ask for four or five men from the Math if you like; you can find some orphans in two days if you seek from village to village.

Of course we must have a permanent centre. And can anything be done in this country unless the—help? Do not mix in politics etc., nor have any connection with them. At the same time you need not have any quarrel with anybody. You must put your body, mind, and all you have to some one work. Here I gave a lecture to a European audience in English, and another to the Indian residents in Hindi. This was my maiden speech in Hindi, but everyone liked it for all that. Of course the Westerners, as is their wont, were in raptures over it, as coming from a "nigger"! "Oh, how wonderful!" and that sort of thing. Next Saturday there will be another lecture for the Europeans. A big Association has been set on foot here—let us wait and see how far it works in future. The object of the Association is to impart education and religion.

Monday next, trip to Bareilly, then to Saharanpur, next to Ambala, thence, most probably, to Mussoorie with Captain Sevier, and as soon as it is a little cool, return to the plains and journey to Rajputana etc. Go on working at top speed. Never fear! I, too, have determined to work. The body must go, no mistake about that. Why then let it go in idleness? "It is better to wear out than rust out". Don't be anxious even when I die, my very bones will work miracles. We must spread over the whole of India in ten years, short of this it is no good. To work, like an athlete!—Victory to the Guru! Money and all will come of themselves, we want men, not money. It is man that makes everything, what can money do?—Men we want, the more you get, the better. . . . Here, for instance, was M—who brought together a lot of money, but there was no man, and what good did he achieve?

Yours affly.,
VIVEKANANDA.

155

Constant salutation be to Shri Ramakrishna, the Free, the Ishvara, the Shiva-form, by whose power we and the whole world are blessed.

ALMORA,
3rd July, 1897.

MAYEST THOU LIVE LONG, O SHARATCHANDRA![1]

Those writers of Shâstra who do not tend towards work say that all-powerful destiny prevails; but others who are workers consider the will of man as superior. Knowing that the quarrel, between those who believe in the human will as the remover of misery and others who rely on destiny, is due to indiscrimination—try to ascend the highest peak of knowledge.

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[1] A disciple of Swamiji. The letter was written in Sanskrit.

It has been said that adversity is the touchstone of true knowledge, and this may be said a hundred times with regard to the truth: "Thou art That". This truly diagnoses the Vairâgya (dispassion) disease. Blessed is the life of one who has developed this symptom. In spite of your dislike I repeat the old saying: "Wait for a short time." You are tired with rowing; rest on your oars. The momentum will take the boat to the other side. This has been said in the Gita passage (IV. 38), "In good time, having reached perfection in Yoga, one realizes that oneself in one's own heart"; and in the Upanishad, "Immortality is attained neither by riches nor by progeny, but by renunciation alone" (Kaivalya, 2). Here, by the word renunciation Vairagya is referred to. It may be of two kinds, with or without purpose. If the latter, none but worm-eaten brains will try for it. But if the other is referred to, then renunciation would mean the withdrawal of the mind from other things and concentrating it on God or Atman. The Lord of all cannot be any particular individual. He must be the sum total. One possessing Vairagya does not understand by Atman the individual ego but the All-pervading Lord, residing as the Self and Internal Ruler in all. He is perceivable by all as the sum total. This being so, as Jiva and Ishvara are in essence the same, serving the Jivas and loving God must mean one and the same thing. Here is a peculiarity; when you serve a Jiva with the idea that he is a Jiva, it is Dayâ (compassion) and not Prema (love); but when you serve him with the idea that he is Self, that is Prema. That the Atman is the one objective of love is known from Shruti, Smriti, and direct perception. Bhagavân Chaitanya was right, therefore, when He said, "Love to God and compassion to the Jivas." This conclusion of the Bhagavân, intimating differentiation between Jiva and Ishvara, was right, as He was a dualist. But for us, Advaitists, this notion of Jiva as distinct from God is the cause of bondage. Our principle, therefore, should be love, and not compassion. The application of the word compassion even to Jiva seems to me to be rash and vain. For us, it is not to pity but to serve.

Ours is not the feeling of compassion but of love, and the feeling of Self in all.

For thy good, O Sharman, may thine be Vairagya, the feeling of which is love, which unifies all inequalities, cures the disease of Samsâra, removes the three-fold misery inevitable in this phenomenal world, reveals the true nature of all things, destroys the darkness of Mâyâ, and which brings out the Selfhood of everything from Brahmâ to the blade of grass!

This is the constant prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.
Ever bound to thee in love.

156*

Salutation to Bhagavân Ramakrishna!

ALMORA,
9th July, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

Today I send back the proofs of the Objects of our Association that you sent me, corrected. The rules and regulations portion (which the members of our Association had read) is full of mistakes. Correct it very carefully and reprint it, or people will laugh.

. . . The kind of work that is going on at Berhampore is exceedingly nice. It is these works that will triumph—can doctrines and dogmas touch the heart? Work, work—live the life; what do doctrines and opinions count? Philosophy and Yoga and penance—the worship-room—your sunned rice or vegetable offerings—all these constitute the religion of one man or one country; doing good to others is the one great, universal religion. Men and women, young and old, down to the Pariah nay, the very animal—all can grasp this religion. Can a merely negative religion be of any avail? The stone is never unchaste, the cow never tells a lie, nor do trees commit theft or robbery, but what does it matter?

Granted that you do not steal, nor tell a lie, nor lead an unchaste life, but meditate four hours a day, and religiously ring the bell for twice as many hours—yet, what matters it after all? That work, little as it is, that you have done, has brought Berhampore to your feet for ever—now people will do whatever you wish them to. Now you will no longer have to argue to the people that "Ramakrishna *is* God". Without it what will mere lectures do? Do fine words butter parsnips? If you could do like that in ten districts, all the ten would become yours to have and hold. Therefore, like the intelligent boy that you are, lay your greatest stress, for the present, on that work department, and try heart and soul to augment the utility of that alone. Organize a number of boys to go from door to door, let them fetch, in the manner of the Alakhiâ Sâdhus, whatever they can get—money or worn out clothes or rice and eatables, or anything. Then distribute them. That is work, work indeed. After that people will have faith, and will then do what they are told!

Whatever is left over after defraying the expenses of the Calcutta meeting, remit for famine relief, or help with it the countless poor that live in the slums of Calcutta; let Memorial Halls and things of that kind go to the dogs. The Lord will do what He thinks best. I am at present in excellent health. . . .

Why are you not collecting materials?—I shall go down and start the paper myself. Kindness and love can buy you the whole world; lectures and books and philosophy all stand lower than these.

Please write to Shashi to open a work department like this for the service of the poor.

. . . Curtail the expenses of worship to a rupee or two per mensem. The children of the Lord are dying of starvation. . . . Worship with water and Tulasi leaves alone, and let the allowance for His Bhoga (food offerings) be sent in offering food to the Living God who dwells in the persons of the poor—then will His grace descend on everything. Yogen felt unwell here; so today he started for Calcutta. I shall again go to Dewaldhar tomorrow. Please accept my love and tender it to all.

Affly yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

157

Almora,
9th July, 1897.

Dear Sister,[1]

I am very sorry to read between the lines the desponding tone of your letter, and I understand the cause; thank you for your warning, I understand your motive perfectly. I had arranged to go with Ajit Singh to England, but the doctors not allowing, it fell through. I shall be so happy to learn that Harriet has met him. He will be only too glad to meet any of you.

I had also a lot of cuttings from different American papers fearfully criticising my utterances about American women and furnishing me with the strange news that I had been out-casted! As if I had any caste to lose, being a Sannyâsin!

Not only no caste has been lost, but it has considerably shattered the opposition to sea-voyage—my going to the West. If I should have to be outcasted, it would be with half the ruling princes of India and almost all of educated India. On the other hand, a leading Raja of the caste to which I belonged before my entering the order got up a banquet in my honour, at which were most of the *big bugs* of that caste. The Sannyasins, on the other hand, may not dine with any one in India as it would be beneath the dignity of gods to dine with mere mortals. They are regarded as Nârâyanas, while the others are mere men. And dear Mary, these feet have been washed and wiped and worshipped by the descendants of kings, and there has been a progress through the country which none ever commanded in India.

It will suffice to say that the police were necessary to keep order if I ventured out into the street! This is outcasting indeed! Of course, that took the starch out of the missionaries, and who are they here?—Nobodies. We are in blissful ignorance of their existence all the time. I had in a lecture said something about the missionaries and the origin of that species except the English Church gentlemen, and in that connection had to refer to the very churchy women of America and their power of inventing scandals. This the missionaries are parading as an attack on American women *en masse* to undo my work there, as they well know that anything said against themselves will rather please the U.S. people. My dear Mary, supposing I had said all sorts of fearful things against the "Yanks"—would that be paying off a millionth part of what they say of our *mothers* and *sisters*? "Neptune's waters" would be perfectly useless to wash off the hatred the Christian "Yanks" of both sexes bear to us "heathens of India"—and what harm have we done them? Let the "Yanks" learn to be patient under criticism and then criticize others. It is a well-known psychological fact that those who are ever ready to abuse others cannot bear the slightest touch of criticism from others. Then again, what do I owe them? Except your family, Mrs. Bull, the Leggetts, and a few other kind persons, who else has been kind to me? Who came forward to help me work out my ideas? I had to work till I am at death's door and had to spend nearly the whole of that energy in America, so that the Americans may learn to be broader and more spiritual. In England I worked only six months. There was not a breath of scandal save one, and that was the working of an American woman, which greatly relieved my English friends—not only no attacks, but many of the best English Church clergymen became my firm friends, and without asking I got much help for my work, and I am sure to get much more. There is a society watching my work and getting help for it, and four respectable persons followed me to India to help my work, and dozens were ready, and the next time I go, hundreds will be.

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[1] Miss Mary Hale.

Dear, dear Mary, do not be afraid for me. . . . The world is big, very big, and there must be some place for me even if the "Yankees" rage. Anyhow, I am quite satisfied with my work. I never planned anything. I have taken things as they came. Only one idea was burning in my brain—to start the machine for elevating the Indian masses—and that I have succeeded in doing to a certain extent. It would have made your heart glad to see how my boys are working in the midst of famine and disease and misery—nursing by the mat-bed of the cholera-stricken Pariah and feeding the starving Chandâla

—and the Lord sends help to me and to them all. "What are men?" He is with me, the Beloved, He was when I was in America, in England, when I was roaming about unknown from place to place in India. What do I care about what they talk—the babies, they do not know any better. What! I, who have realized the Spirit and the vanity of all earthly nonsense, to be swerved from my path by babies' prattle! Do I look like that?

I had to talk a lot about myself because I owed that to you. I feel my task is done—at most three or four years more of life are left. I have lost all wish for my salvation. I never wanted earthly enjoyments. I must see my machine in strong working order, and then knowing sure that I have put in a lever for the good of humanity, in India at least, which no power can drive back, I will sleep, without caring what will be next; and may I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls; and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.

"He who is in you and is outside of you, who works through every hand, who walks through every foot, whose body you are, Him worship, and break all other idols.

"He who is the high and the low, the saint and the sinner, the god and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent, break all other idols.

"In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death nor going nor coming, in whom we always have been and always will be one, Him worship, break all other idols.

"Ay, fools, neglecting the living Gods and His infinite reflection with which the world is full, and running after imaginary shadows, Him worship, the only visible, and break all other idols."

My time is short, I have got to unbreast whatever I have to say, without caring if it smarts some or irritates others. Therefore, my dear Mary, do not be frightened at whatever drops from my lips, for the power behind me is not Vivekananda but He the Lord, and He knows best. If I have to please the world, that will be injuring the world; the voice of the majority is wrong, seeing that they govern and make the sad state of the world. Every new thought must create opposition—in the civilized a polite sneer, in the vulgar savage howls and filthy scandals.

Even these earthworms must stand erect, even children must see light. The Americans are drunk with new wine. A hundred waves of prosperity have come and gone over my country. We have learnt the lesson which no child can yet understand. It is vanity. This hideous world is Mâyâ. Renounce and be happy. Give up the idea of sex and possessions. There is no other bond. Marriage and sex and money are the only living devils. All earthly love proceeds from the body. No sex, no possessions; as these fall off, the eyes open to spiritual vision. The soul regains its own infinite power. How I wish I were in England to see Harriet, I have one wish left—to see you four sisters before I die, and that must happen.

Yours ever affly.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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ALMORA,
10th July, 1897

MY DEAR JOE JOE,

I am glad to learn that you have at last found out that I have time to read your letters.

I have taken to the Himalayas, tired of lecturing and orating. I am so sorry the doctors would not allow my going over with the Raja of Khetri to England, and that has made Sturdy mad.

The Seviers are at Simla and Miss Müller here in Almora.

The plague has subsided but the famine is still here, and as it looks (on account of no rain as yet), it may wear yet a terrible aspect.

I am very busy from here directing work by my boys in some of the famine districts.

Do come by all means; only you must remember this.

The Europeans and the Hindus (called "Natives" by the Europeans) live as oil and water. Mixing with Natives is damning to the Europeans.

There are no good hotels to speak of even at the capitals. You will have to travel with a number of servants about you (cost cheaper than hotels). You will have to bear with people who wear only a loin cloth; you will see me with only a loin cloth about me. Dirt and filth everywhere, and brown people. But you will have plenty of men to talk to you philosophy. If you mix with the English much here, you will have more comforts but see nothing of the Hindus as they are. Possibly I will not be able to eat with you, but I promise that I will travel to good many places with you and do everything in my power to make your journey pleasant. These are what you expect; if anything good comes, so much the better. Perhaps Mary Hale may come over with you. There is a young lady, Miss Campbell, Orchard Lake, Orchard Island, Michigan, who is a great worshipper of Krishna and lives alone in that Island, fasting and praying. She will give anything to be able to see India once, but she is awfully poor. If you bring her with you, I will anyhow manage to pay her expenses. If Mrs. Bull brings old Landsberg with her, that will be saving that fool's life, as it were.

Most probably I may accompany you back to America. Kiss Holister for me and the baby. My love to Alberta, to the Leggetts, and to Mabel. What is Fox doing? Give him my love when you see him. To Mrs. Bull and S. Saradananda my love. I am as strong as ever, but it all depends upon leading a quiet life ever afterwards. No hurly-burly any more.

I had a great mind to go to Tibet this year; but they would not allow me, as the road is dreadfully fatiguing. However, I content myself with galloping hard over precipices on mountain ponies. This is more exciting than your bicycle even, although I had an experience of that at Wimbledon. Miles and miles of uphill and miles and miles of downhill, the road a few feet broad hanging over sheer precipices several thousand feet deep below.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. The best time to come is to arrive in India by October or beginning of November. December, January, and February you see things all over and then start by the end of February. From March it begins to get hot. Southern India is *always hot*.

Goodwin has gone to work in Madras on a paper to be started there soon.
V.

159

ALMORA,
11th July, 1897.

MY DEAR SHUDDHANANDA,

I was very glad to receive your last report. I have very little criticism to make except that you ought to write a bit more legibly.

I am quite satisfied with the work done so far, but it must be pushed forward. I have not learnt as yet of the suggestion I made before as to getting a set of chemical and physical apparatus and starting classes in elementary and experimental chemistry and physics, especially in physiology.

What about the other suggestion of buying sets of all the scientific books that have been translated into Bengali?

It now seems to me that there must at least be three Mahantas (heads) elected at a time—one to direct the business part, one the experimental, the other the intellectual part.

The difficulty is to get the director of education. Brahmananda and Turiyananda may well fill the other two. Of visitors I am sorry to learn that you are only getting Babus from Calcutta. They are no good. What we want are brave young men, who will work, not tomfools.

Ask Brahmananda to write to both Abhedananda and Saradananda to send weekly reports to the Math without fail, also to send Bengali articles and notes for the would-be paper. Is G. C. Ghosh getting up things for the paper? Work on with a will and be ready.

Akhandananda is working wonderfully at Mahula, but the system is not good. It seems they are frittering away their energies in one little village, and that only doling out rice.

I do not hear that any preaching has been done along with this helping. All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves. Our work should be mainly *educational,* both moral and intellectual. I have not learnt anything about it—only so many *beggars are helped*! Ask Brahmananda to open centres in different districts so as to cover the largest space with our small means.

And then, so far it seems to have been ineffectual, for they have not succeeded in rousing the people of the place to start societies to educate the people, so that they may learn to be self-reliant, frugal, and not given to marrying, and thus save themselves from future famine. Charity opens the heart, but work on through that wedge.

The easiest way is to take a hut—make it a temple of Guru Maharaj! Let the poor come there to be helped, also to worship. Let there be Kathâ (Pauranic recitals) morning and evening there—through that you may teach all you want to teach the people. By degrees the people will be interested. They will keep up the temple themselves; maybe the hut-temple will evolve into a great institution in a few years. Let those that go to relief work first select a central spot in each district and start such a hut-temple, from which all our little work is to proceed.

Even the greatest fool can accomplish a task if it be after his heart. But the intelligent man is he who can convert every work into one that suits his taste. No work is petty. Everything in this world is like a banyan-seed, which, though appearing tiny as a mustard-seed, has yet the gigantic banyan tree latent within it. He indeed is intelligent who notices this and succeeds in making all work truly great.[1]

Moreover, they have to see that cheats do not get the food of the deserving. India is full of lazy rogues, and curious, they never die of hunger, they always get something. Ask Brahmananda to write this to everyone in relief-work—they must not be allowed to spend money to no good. We want the greatest possible good work permanent from the least outlay.

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[1] This paragraph only is translated from Bengali.

Now you see you must try to think out original ideas—else, as soon as I die, the whole thing will tumble to pieces. For example, you hold a meeting to consider, "How we can reap the best permanent results out of the small means at our disposal". Let all have notice a few days before and let each suggest something and discuss all the suggestions, criticising them, and then send me a report.

Lastly, you must remember I expect more from my children than from my brethren. I want each one of my children to be a hundred times greater than I could ever be. Everyone of you *must be a giant—must,* that is my word. Obedience, readiness, and love for the cause—if you have these three, nothing can hold you back.

With love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

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DEULDHAR, ALMORA,
13th July, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

Going to Almora from here I made special efforts for Yogen. But he left for the plains as soon as he had recovered a little. From Subhala valley he will write to me of his safe arrival there. As it is impossible to procure a Dandi or any other conveyance, Latu could not go. Achyut and myself have again come back to this place. Today my health is a little bad owing to this riding on horseback at breakneck speed in the sun. I took (doctor) Shashi Babu's medicine for two weeks—I find no special benefit. . . . The pain in the liver is gone, and owing to plenty of exercise my hands and legs have become muscular, but the abdomen is distending very much. I feel suffocated while getting up or sitting down. Perhaps this is due to the taking of milk. Ask Shashi if I can give up milk. Previously I suffered from two attacks of sun-stroke. From that time, my eyes become red if I expose myself to the sun, and the health continues to be bad for two or three days at a stretch.

I was very pleased to know all the news from the Math, and I also heard that the famine relief work is going on well. Please let me know if any money has been received from the office of the *Brahmavadin* for famine relief. Some money will be sent soon from here also. There is famine in many other places also, so it is not necessary to stay so long in one place. Tell them to go to other localities and write to each man to go to a separate place. All such work is real work. If the field is made ready in this way, the seeds of spiritual knowledge can be sown. Remember this always—that the only answer to those conservative fanatics who abuse us, is such work. I have no objection to get the thing printed as Shashi and Sarada are suggesting.

You yourselves come to a decision as to what the name of the Math (monastery) should be. . . . The money will come within seven weeks; but I have no further news about the land. In this matter it seems to me that it will be good if we can get the garden of Kristo Gopal in Cossipore.[1] What do you say? In future great works will be accomplished. If you agree with me, don't let this matter out to anybody either within the Math or outside, but quietly make enquiries. The work is spoiled if plans are not kept secret. If it can be bought within fifteen or sixteen thousand, then buy at once—of course, only if you think it good. If something more is demanded, make some advance payment and wait for those seven weeks. My view is that for the present it is better to buy it. Everything else will come by and by. All our associations centre round that garden. In reality that is our first Math. Let the thing be done very privately.

A work can be judged by its results only, just as one can infer the nature of previous mental tendencies by their resultant in present behaviour. . . .

Undoubtedly the price of the land of the garden at Cossipore has increased; but our purse has, on the other hand, thinned. Do something or other, but do it quickly. All work is spoilt by dilatoriness. This garden also has to be acquired —if not today, tomorrow—however big the Math on the banks of the Ganga may be. It will be still better if you can broach the subject through a proxy. If they hear that we are willing to buy, they will bid high. Do the work very confidentially. Be fearless; Shri Ramakrishna is our helper what fear? Give my love to all.

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[1] Where Shri Ramakrishna spent the last few months of his life with his future apostles.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. (on the cover): . . . Make special efforts for Cossipore. . . . Give up the land at Belur. Should the poor[1] die of starvation while you people at the top are indulging in controversy regarding to whom the credit should go? If "Mahabodhi" takes all the credit, let it. Let the poor be benefited. That the work is going on well is good news. Work on with greater energy. I am beginning to send articles. The saccharine and lime have reached.
V.

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ALMORA,
23rd July, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS NOBLE,

Excuse these few lines. I shall write more fully as soon as I reach some place, I am on my way from the hills to the plains.

I do not understand what you mean by frankness without familiarity—I for one will give anything to get rid of the last lingering bit of Oriental formality in me and speak out like a child of nature. Oh, to live even for a day in the full light of freedom, to breathe the free air of simplicity! Is not that the highest purity?

In this world we work through fear of others, we talk through fear, we think through fear, alas! we are born in a land of enemies. Who is there who has been able to get rid of this feeling of fear, as if everyone is a spy set specially to watch him? And woe unto the man who pushes himself forward; Will it ever be a land of friends? Who knows? We can only try.

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[1] The famine-stricken people for whom the Maha Bodhi Society agreed to pay on condition that its name would be acknowledged.

The work has already begun, and at present famine-relief is the thing next to hand. Several centres have been opened and the work goes on—famine-relief, preaching, and a little teaching. As yet of course it is very very insignificant, the boys in training are being taken out as opportunity is offering itself. The sphere of action at present is Madras and Calcutta. Mr. Goodwin is working in Madras. Also one has gone to Colombo. From the next week a monthly report of the whole work will be forwarded to you if it has not already reached you. I am away from the centre of work, so things go a little slow, you see, but the work is satisfactory on the whole.

You can do more work for us from England than by coming here. Lord bless you for your great self-sacrifice for the poor Indians.

I entirely agree with you that the work in England will look up when I am there. But all the same, it is not proper to leave India before the machine is moving at some rate, and I am sure that there are many to guide it in my absence. That will be done in a few months. "God willing", as the Mussulmans say. One of my best workers is now in England, the Raja of Khetri. I expect him soon in India, and he will be of great service to me no doubt.

With everlasting love and blessings,

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

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Salutation to Bhagavân Ramakrishna !

ALMORA,
24th July, 1897.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am very glad to receive your letter and go through the contents. Your wishes about the orphanage are very good, and Shri Maharaj[1] will not fail to fulfil them at an early date. Try your best to found a permanent centre. . . . Never worry about money. Tomorrow I shall leave Almora for the plains; and wherever there will be made some stir, I shall open a subscription list for famine—set your mind easy on that score. When in every district there will be a Math on the model of our Math in Calcutta, then will my heart's desire be fulfilled. Let not the work of preaching, too, be at a standstill, and greater even than preaching is the work of imparting education. By means of lectures and the like, the village people must be taught religion, history, and such other subjects—especially, history. To help our educational work there is a Society in England, which, as I find from reports, is doing excellent work. In time we shall get help of this kind from everywhere, don't be frightened. They only do work who think that help *will* come, directly they are on the field of work.

All strength is in you, have faith in it. It will not go unmanifested. Accept my heartiest love and blessings, and convey them to the Brahmachârin. Write now and then fiery letters to the Math, so that all may take heart and work. Victory to the Guru!

Yours affly.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] Shri Ramakrishna.

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ALMORA,
25th July, 1897.

MY DEAR MARIE,

I have time, will, and opportunity now to clear my promise. So my letter begins. I have been very weak for some time, and with that and other things my visit to England this Jubilee season had to be postponed.

I was very sorry at first not to be able to meet my nice and very dear friends once more, but Karma cannot be avoided, and I had to rest contented with my Himalayas.

It is a sorry exchange, after all; for the beauty of the living spirit shining through the human face is far more pleasurable than any amount of material beauty.

Is not the soul the light of the world?

The work in London had to go slow—for various reasons, and last though not the least was *l'argent, mon amie*! When I am there *l'argent* comes in somehow, to keep the mare going. Now everybody shrugs his shoulder. I must come again and try my best to revive the work.

I am having a good deal of riding and exercise, but I had to drink a lot of skimmed milk per prescription of the doctors, with the result that I am more to the front than back! I am always a forward man though—but do not want to be too prominent just now, and I have given up drinking milk.

I am glad to learn that you are eating your meals with good appetite.

Do you know Miss Margaret–Noble of Wimbledon? She is working hard for me. Do correspond with her if you can, and you can help me a good deal there. Her address is, Brantwood, Worple Road, Wimbledon.

So you saw my little friend Miss Orchard and you liked her too—good. I have great hopes for her. And how I should like to be retired from life's activities entirely when I am very old, and hear the world ringing with the names of my dear, dear young friends like yourself and Miss Orchard etc.!

By the by, I am glad to find that I am aging fast, my hair is turning grey. "Silver threads among the gold"—I mean black—are coming in fast.

It is bad for a preacher to be young, don't you think so? I do, as I did all my life. People have more confidence in an old man, and it looks more venerable. Yet the old rogues are the worst rogues in the world, isn't it?

The world has its code of judgment which, alas, is very different from that of truth's.

So your "Universal Religion" has been rejected by the *Revue de deux Mondes*. Never mind, try again some other paper. Once the ice is broken, you get in at a quick rate, I am sure. And I am so glad that you love the work; it will make its way, I have no doubt of it. Our ideas have a future, *ma chère* Marie—and it will be realized soon.

I think this letter will meet you in Paris—your beautiful Paris—and I hope you will write me lots, about French journalism and the coming "World's Fair" there.

I am so glad that you have been helped by Vedanta and Yoga. I am unfortunately sometimes like the circus clown who made others laugh, himself miserable! !

You are naturally of a buoyant temperament. Nothing seems to touch you. And you are moreover a very prudent girl, inasmuch as you have scrupulously kept yourself away from "love" and all its nonsense. So you see you have made your good Karma and planted the seed of your lifelong well-being. Our difficulty in life is that we are guided by the present and not by the future. What gives us a little pleasure now drags us on to follow it, with the result that we always buy a mass of pain in the future for a little pleasure in the present.

I wish I had nobody to love, and I were an orphan in my childhood. The greatest misery in my life has been my own people—my brothers and sisters and mother etc. Relatives are like deadly clogs to one's progress, and is it not a wonder that people will still go on to find new ones by *marriage*?

He who is alone is happy. Do good to all, like everyone, but *do not love* any one. It is a bondage, and bondage brings only misery. Live alone in your mind—that is happiness. To have nobody to care for and never minding who cares for one is the way to be free.

I envy so much your frame of mind—quiet, gentle, light yet deep and *free*. You are already free, Marie, free already—

you are Jivan-mukta. I am more of a woman than a man, you are more of a man than woman. I am always dragging others' pain into me—for nothing, without being able to do any good to anybody—just as women, if they have no children, bestow all their love upon a cat! ! !

Do you think this has any spirituality in it? Nonsense, it is all material *nervous bondage*—that is what it is. O! to get rid of the thraldom of the flesh!

Your friend Mrs. Martin very kindly sends me copies of her magazine every month—but Sturdy's thermometer is now below zero, it seems. He seems to be greatly disappointed with my non-arrival in England this summer. What could I do?

We have started two Maths (monasteries) here, one in Calcutta, the other in Madras. The Calcutta Math (a wretched rented house) was awfully shaken in the late earthquake.

We have got in a number of boys, and they are in training; also we have opened famine-relief in several places, and the work is going on apace. We will try to start similar centres in different places in India.

In a few days I am going down to the plains and from thence go to the Western parts of the mountains. When it is cooler in the plains, I will make a lecture tour all over and see what work can be done.

Here I cannot find any more time to write—so many people are waiting—so here I stop, dear Marie, wishing you all joy and happiness.

May you never be lured by flesh is the constant prayer of,

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

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ALMORA,
29th July, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS NOBLE,

A letter from Sturdy reached me yesterday, informing me that you are determined to come to India and see things with your own eyes. I replied to that yesterday, but what I learnt from Miss Müller about your plans makes this further note necessary, and it is better that it should be direct.

Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man, but a woman; a real lioness, to work for the Indians, women specially.

India cannot yet produce great women, she must borrow them from other nations. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination, and above all, the Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted.

Yet the difficulties are many. You cannot form any idea of the misery, the superstition, and the slavery that are here. You will be in the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women with quaint ideas of caste and isolation, shunning the white skin through fear or hatred and hated by them intensely. On the other hand, you will be looked upon by the white as a crank, and every one of your movements will be watched with suspicion.

Then the climate is fearfully hot; our winter in most places being like your summer, and in the south it is always blazing.

Not one European comfort is to be had in places out of the cities. If, in spite of all this, you dare venture into the work, you are welcome, a hundred times welcome. As for me, I am nobody here as elsewhere, but what little influence I have, shall be devoted to your service.

You must think well before you plunge in, and after work, if you fail in this or get disgusted, on my part I promise you, *I will stand by you unto death* whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta or remain in it. "The tusks of the elephant come out, but never go back"; so are the words of a man never retracted. I promise you that. Again, I must give you a bit of warning. You must stand on your own feet and not be under the wings of Miss Müller or anybody else. Miss Müller is a good lady in her own way, but unfortuately it got into her head, when she was a girl, that she was a born leader and that no other qualifications were necessary to move [illegible] this idea is coming on the surface again and again in spite of herself, and you will find it impossible to pull on with her in a few days. She now intends to take a house in Calcutta for herself and yourself and other European or American friends who may come.

It is very kind and good of her, but her Lady Abbess plan will never be carried out for two reasons—her violent temper and overbearing conduct, and her awfully vacillating mind. Friendship with many is best at a distance, and everything goes well with the person who stands on his own feet.

Mrs. Sevier is a jewel of a lady, so good, so kind. The Seviers are the *only* English people who do not hate the natives, Sturdy not excepted. Mr. and Mrs. Sevier are the only persons who *did not come* to patronise us, but they have no fixed plans yet. When you come, you may get them to work with you, and that will be really helpful to them and to you. But after all, it is absolutely necessary to stand on one's own feet.

I learn from America, two friends of mine, Mrs. Ole Bull of Boston and Miss MacLeod, are coming on a visit to India this autumn. Miss MacLeod you already know in London, that Paris-dressed young American lady; Mrs. Ole Bull is about fifty and has been a kind friend to me in America.

I may suggest that your joining the party may while away the tedium of the journey, as they also are coming by way of Europe.

I am glad to receive a note at last from Sturdy after long. But it was so stiff and cold. It seems he is disappointed at the collapse of the London work.

With everlasting love,

Yours ever in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

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THE MATH,[1]
19th August, 1897.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

My health is indifferent and although I have some rest, I do not think I shall be able to regain my usual vigour till winter next. I had a letter from Joe saying that you are both coming to India. I, of course, will be very glad to see you in

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[1] The letter was actually written from Ambala.

India, only you ought to know from the first that India is the dirtiest and unhealthiest hole in the world, with scarcely any European comforts except in the big capitals.

I learn from England that Mr. Sturdy is sending Abhedananda to New York. It seems that the English work is impossible without me. Only a magazine will be started and worked by Mr. Sturdy. I had arranged to come to England this season, but I was foolishly prevented by the doctors. In India the work is going on.

I do not think any European or American will be of any service here just now, and it will be hard for any Westerner to bear the climate. Annie Besant with her exceptional powers works only among the Theosophists, and thus she submits to all the indignities of isolation which a Mlechchha is made to undergo here. Even Goodwin smarts now and then and has to be called to order. Goodwin is doing good work as he is a man and can mix with the people. Women have no place in men's society here, and she can do good only among her own sex in India. The English friends that came over to India have not been of any help as yet, and do not know whether they will be of any in the future. With all these if anybody wants to try, she is welcome.

If Saradananda wants to come he may, and I am sure he will be of very good service to me just now in organizing the work, now that my health is broken. There is a young English woman, Miss Margaret Noble, very eager to come to India to learn the state of things, so that she may do so some work when she is back home. I have written her to accompany you in case you come via London. The great difficulty is that you can never understand the situation here from a distance. The two types are so entirely different in all things that it is not possible to form any idea from America and England.

You ought to think that you are starting for the interior of Africa, and if you meet anything better, that will be unexpected.

Ever yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,
1st October, 1897.

DEAR MARGOT,

Some people do the best work when *led.* Not everyone is *born to lead.* The best leader, however, is one who "leads like the baby". The baby, though apparently depending on everyone, is the king of the household. At least, to my thinking, that is the secret. . . . Many feel, but only a few can express. It is the power of expressing one's love and appreciation and sympathy for others, that enables one person to succeed better in spreading the idea than others. . . .

I shall not try to describe Kashmir to you. Suffice it to say, I never felt sorry to leave any country except this Paradise on earth; and I am trying my best, if I can, to influence the Raja in starting a centre. So much to do here, and the material so hopeful! . .

The great difficulty is this: I see persons giving me almost the whole of their love. But I must not give any one the whole of mine in return, for that day the work would be ruined. Yet there are some who will look for such a return, not having the breadth of the impersonal view. It is absolutely necessary to the work that I should have the enthusiastic love of as many as possible, while I myself remain entirely impersonal. Otherwise jealousy and quarrels would break up everything. A leader must be impersonal. I am sure you understand this. I do not mean that one should be a brute, making use of the devotion of others for his own ends, and laughing in his sleeve meanwhile. What I mean is what I am, intensely personal in my love, but having the power to pluck out my own heart with my own hand, if it becomes necessary, "for the good of many, for the welfare of many", as Buddha said. Madness of love, and yet in it no bondage. Matter changed into spirit by the force of love. Nay, that is the gist of our Vedanta. There is but One, seen by the ignorant as matter, by the wise as God. And the history of civilization is the progressive reading of spirit into matter. The ignorant see the person in the non-person. The sage sees the non-person in the person.

Through pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, this is the one lesson we are learning. . . .

Yours ever with love and truth,
VIVEKANANDA.

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MURREE,
10th October, 1897.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am very glad to receive your letter. You need not make a big plan for the present, but do only what is possible under existing circumstances. Gradually the way will open to you. We must certainly have the orphanage, no hesitating in that. We must not leave the girls in the lurch either. But then we must have a lady superintendent for an orphanage of girls. I believe Mother will be a very good hand for that. Or engage for this task some aged widow of the village who has no issue. And there must be separate places for the boys and girls. Captain Sevier is ready to send you money to help in this. Nedou's Hotel, Lahore—that is his address. If you write to him, write the words, "To wait arrival", on the letter. I am soon going to Rawalpindi, tomorrow or the day after; then I visit Lahore and other places via Jammu, and return to Rajputana via Karachi etc.

I am doing well.

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. You must admit Mohammedan boys too, but never tamper with their religion. The only thing you will have to do is to make separate arrangements for their food etc., and teach them so that they may be moral, manly, and devoted to doing good to others. This indeed is religion.

Shelve your intricate philosophical speculations for the present.

In our country we at present need manhood and kindness. स ईशः अनिर्वचनीयप्रेमस्वरूपः —"The Lord is the Essence of unutterable Love". But instead of saying प्रकाश्यते क्वापि पात्रे —"He is manifest in special objects", we should say, स प्रत्यक्ष एव सर्वेषां प्रेमरूपः —He is ever manifest as Love in all beings. What other God—the creation of your mind—are you then going to worship! Let the Vedas, the Koran, the Puranas, and all scriptural lumber rest now for some time—let there be worship of the visible God of Love and Compassion in the country. All idea of separation is bondage, that of non-differentiation is Mukti (liberation). Let not the words of people, dead-drunk with worldliness, terrify you. अभीरभीः —"Be fearless!" "Not men, but worms!" Admit boys of all religion—Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, or anything; but begin rather gently—I mean, see that they get their food and drink a little separately, and teach them only the universal side of religion.

Be mad over this, and strike others with this madness! This life has no other end. Preach His name, let His teachings penetrate the world to the very bone. Never forget. Repeat this Mantra in your heart of hearts unceasingly, as you go the round of your daily duties.

Yours,
V.

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MURREE,
11th October, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I feel I have been working as if under an irresistible impulse for the last ten days, beginning from Kashmir. It may be either a physical or a mental disease. Now I have come to the conclusion that I am unfit for further work. . . . I now understand that I have been very harsh to all of you. But I knew, however, that you would bear with all my shortcomings; in the Math there is no one else who will do so. I have been increasingly harsh to you. Whatever has happened is now past—it is all the result of past Karma. What is the good of my repentance? I do not believe it. It is all Karma. Whatever of Mother's work was to be accomplished through me, She made me do, and has now flung me aside breaking down my body and mind. Her will be done!

Now I retire from all this work. In a day or two I shall give up everything and wander out alone; I shall spend the rest of my life quietly in some place or other. Forgive me if you all will, or do what you like. Mrs. Bull has given much of the money. She has implicit confidence in Sharat (Swami Saradananda). Do the work of the Math with Sharat's advice; or do as you will. But I have all along been like a hero—I want my work to be quick like lightning, and firm as adamant. Similarly shall I die also. Therefore kindly do my work for me—no question of success or defeat enters here at all. I have never retreated in a fight—shall I now. . . ? There is success and failure in every work. But I am inclined to believe that one who is a coward will after death be born as an insect or a worm, that there is no salvation for a coward even after millions of years of penance. Well, shall I after all be born as a worm? . . . In my eyes this world is mere play—and it will always remain as such. Should one spend six long months brooding over the questions of honour and disgrace, gain and loss pertaining to this? . . . I am a man of action. Simply advice upon advice is being given—this one says this, that one says that; again, that man threatens, and this one frightens! This life is not, in my view, such a sweet thing that I would long to live through so much care and caution and fear. Money, life, friends and relatives, and the love of men and myself—if one wants to enter into work fully assured beforehand of all these—if one has to be so much ridden with fear, then one will get just what Gurudeva used to say, "The crow thinks itself very clever, but . . ."[1]—well, he will get that. After all, what is the purpose behind all these—money and wealth, Maths and institutions, preaching and lecturing? There is only one purpose in the whole of life—education. Otherwise what is the use of men and women, land and wealth?

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[1] "it cannot help eating filth"

So loss of money, or loss of anything else—I cannot bother about, and I will not. When I fight, I fight with girded loins —that much I fully understand; and I also understand that man, that hero, that god, who says, "Don't care, be fearless. O brave one, here I am by your side!" To such a man-god I offer a million salutations. Their presence purifies the world, they are the saviours of the world. And the others who always wail, "Oh, don't go forward, there is *this* danger, there is *that* danger"—those dyspeptics—they always tremble with fear. But through the grace of the Divine Mother my mind is so strong that even the most terrible dyspepsia shall not make me a coward. To cowards what advice shall I offer?—nothing whatsoever have I to say. But this I desire, that I should find shelter at the feet of those brave souls who dared to do great deeds even though they failed to succeed, of those heroes who never quailed nor shirked, of those fighters who never disobeyed orders through fear or pride. I am the child of the Divine Mother, the source of all power and strength. To me, cringing, fawning, whining, degrading inertia and hell are one and the same thing. O Mother of the Universe, O my Gurudeva, who would constantly say, "This is a hero!"—I pray that I may not have to die a coward. This is my prayer, O brother! "उत्पत्स्यतेऽस्ति मम कोऽपि समानधर्मा" —"Certainly there is, or there will be born one equal to me"; some one or other will certainly arise from these thousands of devotees of Shri Ramakrishna who will be like me, and who will be able to understand me.

O hero, awake, and dream no more. Death has caught you by the forelock . . . still fear not. What I have never done—fleeing from the battle—well, will that happen today? For fear of defeat shall I retreat from the fight? Defeat is the ornament the hero adorns himself with. What, to acknowedge defeat without fighting? O Mother, Mother! . . . Not one is capable of even playing second fiddle, and yet the mind is filled with petty self-importance, "We understand everything"! . . . Now I retire; . . . everything I leave in your control. If Mother sends me men again in whose heart there is courage, in whose hands strength, in whose eyes there is fire, real children of the Mother—if She gives me even one such, then I shall work again, then I shall return. Otherwise, I shall take it that, by Mother's will, this is the end. I am in a tremendous hurry, I want to work at hurricane speed, and I want fearless hearts.

I have rebuked poor Sarada (Swami Trigunatita) severely. What to do? . . . I do scold; but I also have much to complain. . . . Almost suffocated by short breathing, and ever standing erect, I wrote an article for him. . . . It is all good, otherwise how will renunciation come? . . . Will Mother in the end kill me with attachment? I have offended all of you —do what you want.

I bless you all with a full heart. May Mother enshrine Herself in your hearts as strength. अभयं प्रतिष्ठां —the support that is fearlessness—may She make you all fearless. This I have seen in life—he who is over-cautious about himself falls into dangers at every step; he who is afraid of losing honour and respect, gets only disgrace; he who is always afraid of loss always loses. . . . May all good attend you all.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

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MURREE,
12th October, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I wrote at length in yesterday's letter. I think it desirable to give you special directions about certain matters. . . . (1) To all those who collect money and send it to the Math . . . the acknowledgment of the amounts will be issued from the Math. (2) The acknowledgment must be in duplicate, one for the sender, and one for filing in the Math. (3) There must be a big register in which all the names and addresses of the donors will be entered. (4) Accounts, accurate to the last pie, must be kept of the amounts that are donated to the Math Fund, and fully accurate accounts should be obtained from Sarada and others to whom money is given. For, lack of accurate account-keeping . . . see that I am not accused as a cheat. These accounts should afterwards be published. (5) Immediately go and register a will. under lawyer's advice to the effect that in case you and I die then Hari and Sharat will succeed to all that there is in our Math.

I have not yet got any news from Ambala, whether Hariprasanna and others have reached there or not. Give the other half-sheet of this letter to Master Mahashay.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

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DEHRA DUN,
24th November, 1897.

MY DEAR M.,

Many many thanks for your second leaflet (leaves from the *Gospel*). It is indeed wonderful. The move is quite original and never was the life of a great Teacher brought before the public untarnished by the writer's mind, as you are presenting this one. The language also is beyond all praise, so fresh, so pointed, and withal so plain and easy.

I cannot express in adequate terms how I have enjoyed the leaflets. I am really in a transport when I read them, Strange, isn't it? Our Teacher and Lord was so original, and each one of us will have to be original or nothing. I now understand why none of us attempted his life before. It has been reserved for you, this great work. He is with you evidently.

With all love and Namaskâra,

VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. The Socratic dialogues are Plato all over, you are entirely hidden. Moreover, the dramatic part is infinitely beautiful. Everybody likes it here and in the West.

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Math, Belur,
Howrah P.O.,
25th February, 1898.

My dear *Shashi*,

Our congratulations for the successful carrying out of the Mahotsava[1] in Madras. Hope you had a good gathering and plenty of spiritual food. We are all so glad that you have girded yourself to teach more of spirituality to the Madras people than those finger twistings and *kling phat*[2] you are so fond of. Really your lecture on *Shriji* (Shri Ramakrishna) was splendid. I could only catch a report in the *Madras Mail* in Khandwa, and the Math people have not had any. Why don't you send us over a copy?

I learn that you complain about my silence, is it? I have written you more letters, however, than you ever wrote me, from Europe and America even. You ought to give me all the news you can from Madras every week. Simplest way is to put down a few lines and a few items of news every day on a sheet.

My health has not been all right of late; at present it is much better. Calcutta is unusually cool just now, and the American friends who are here are enjoying it ever so much. Today we take possession of the land we have bought, and though it is not practicable to have the Mahotsava on it just now. I must have something on it on Sunday. Anyhow, Shriji's relics must be taken to our place for the day and worshipped. Gangadhar (Swami Akhandananda) is here and asks me to write to you that though he has succeeded in getting some subscriptions for the *Brahmavadin*, the delivery being very irregular he is afraid of losing them also soon. I received your letter of recommendation for the young man with the old story of "having nothing to eat, Your Honour" only added in the Madras edition: "got a number of children too", for generating whom no recommendation was needed! I would be very glad to help him, but the fact is, I have no money; every cent I had I have made over to Raja,[1] as they all say I am a spendthrift and are afraid of keeping money with me. I have, however, sent the letter to Rakhal if he can find the way to help your friend, the young man, in having some more children. He writes that the Christians will help him out if he becomes a convert, but he won't. Perhaps he is afraid that his conversion will make Hindu India lose one of her brightest jewels and Hindu society the benefit of his propagating power to eternal misery!

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[1] Big celebration—of Shri Ramakrishna's birthday.
[2] Cryptic Mantras or sound formulae.

The boys here are rather seedy owing to the unusual amount of pure and cool air they are made to breathe and live in on the bank of the Ganga in the new Math. Sarada has his malaria brought over from Dinajpur. I made him eat a dose of opium the other day without much benefit to him except his brain which progressed for some hours towards its natural direction, namely, idiocy. Hari also has a touch; I hope it will take off a good bit of their avoirdupois. By the by, we have once more started the dancing business here, and it would make your heart glad to see Hari and Sarada and my own good self in a waltz. How we keep balance at all is a wonder to me.

Sharat (Swami Saradananda) has come and is hard at work as usual. We have got some good furniture now, and a big jump from the old Châtâi (mat) in the old Math to nice tables and chairs and three Khâts (cots) mind you. We have curtailed the Pujâ (worship) work a good deal, and the amount of pruning your *klings* and *phats* and *svâhâs*, have undergone would make you faint. The Puja occupied only the *day*, and they slept soundly all night. How are Tulsi and Khoka? Are they more tractable with you than under Rakhal? You make run in to Calcutta for a few days giving charge to Tulsi; but it is so expensive, and then you must go back, as Madras has to be *thoroughly worked up*. I am going to America again with Mrs. Bull in a few months.

Give my love to Goodwin and tell him that we are going to see him at any rate on our way to Japan. Shivananda is here, and I have toned down a bit his *great desire* to go to the Himalayas *for good*! Is Tulsi contemplating the same? The

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[1] Rakhal or Swami Brahmananda.

bandicoot-hole will be a sufficient cave for him, I suppose.

So the Math here is a *fait accompli* and I am going over to get more help. . . . Work on with energy. India is a rotten corpse inside and outside. We shall revive it by the blessings of Shri Maharaj (Ramakrishna).

With all love,

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

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MATH, BELUR,
HOWRAH DISTRICT,
BENGAL, INDIA,
2nd March, 1898.

MY DEAR MARY,

You have news of me already, I hope, through the letter I wrote to Mother Church. You are all so kind, the whole family, to me, I must have belonged to you in the past as we Hindus say. My only regret is that the millionaires do not materialise: and I want them so badly just now that I am growing decrepit and old and hot in the midst of building and organizing. Though Harriet has got one of a million virtues, a few millions of cash virtue would have made it more shining, I am sure; so you do not commit the same mistake. A certain young couple had everything favourable to make them man and wife except that the bride's father was determined not to give his daughter to anyone who had not a million. The young people were in despair when a clever match-maker came to the rescue. He asked the bridegroom whether he was willing to part with his nose on payment of a million—which he refused. The match-maker then swore before the bride's father that the bridegroom had in store goods worth several millions, and the match was completed. Don't you take like millions. Well, well, you could not get the millionaire, so I could not get the money; so I had to worry a good deal and work hard to no purpose; so I got the disease. It requires brains like mine to find out the true cause—I am charmed with myself!

Well, it was in Southern India, when I came from London and when the people were fêting and feasting and pumping all the work out of me, that an old hereditary disease made its appearance. The tendency was always there and excess of mental work made it "express" itself. Total collapse and extreme prostration followed, and I had to leave Madras immediately for the cooler North; a day's delay meant waiting for a week in that awful heat for another steamer. By the by, I learnt afterwards that Mr. Barrows arrived in Madras next day and was very much chagrined at not finding me as he expected, though I helped getting up an address for him and arranged for his reception. Poor man, he little knew I was at death's door then.

I have been travelling in the Himalayas all through last summer; and a cold climate, I found immediately, brought me round; but as soon as I come into the heat of the plains, I am down again. From today the heat in Calcutta is becoming intense, and I will soon have to fly. This time to cool America as Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod are here. I have bought a piece of land for the institution on the river Ganga near Calcutta, on which is a little house where they are living now; within a stone's throw is the house where the Math is situated at present in which we live.

So I see them every day, and they are enjoying it immensely *á l'Inde*. They intend making a trip to Kashmir in a month, and I am going with them as a guide and friend and philosopher perhaps, if they are willing. After that we all sail for the land of freedom and scandal.

You need not be alarmed with me as the disease will take two or three years at worst to carry me off. At best it may remain a harmless companion. I am content. Only I am working hard to set things all right and always so that the machine moves forward when I am off the stage. Death I have conquered long ago when I gave up life. My only anxiety is the *work*, and even that to the Lord I dedicate, and He knows best.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

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MATH, BELUR,
HOWRAH,
March, 1898.

MY DEAR *SHASHI*,

I forgot to write you about two things. 1. That Tulsi ought to learn shorthand from Goodwin, at least the beginning. 2. I had to write a letter almost every mail to Madras while I was out of India. I have in vain written for a copy of those letters. Send me all those letters. I want to write out my travels. Do not fail and I shall send them back as soon as they have been used up. The *Dawn* can manage with 200 subscribers to come out regularly on Rs. 40/- an issue expenditure. This is a great fact to know. The *P. B.*[1] seems to be very disorganized; try best to organize it. Poor Alasinga, I am sorry for him. Only thing I can do is to make him entirely free for a year so that he may devote all his energy to the *Brahmavadin* work. Tell him not to worry; I have him always in mind, poor child; his devotion I can never repay.

I am thinking of going to Kashmir again with Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod. Return to Calcutta and start for America from here.

Miss Noble is really an acquisition. She will soon surpass Mrs. Besant as a speaker, I am sure.

Do look after Alasinga. I have an idea that he is breaking himself with work. Tell him, the best work is only done by alternate repose and work. Give him all my love. We had two public lectures in Calcutta, one from Miss Noble and the other from our Sharat. Both of them did very well indeed; there was great enthusiasm, which shows that the Calcutta public has not forgotten us. Some of the members of the Math had a touch of influenza. They are all right now. The thing is working nicely. Shri Mother[2] is here, and the European and American ladies went the other day to see her, and what do you think, *Mother ate with them even there*! Is not that grand? The Lord is watching over us; there is no fear; do not lose your nerves, keep your health and take things easy. It is always good to give a few strong strokes and rest on your oars. Rakhal is living with the new land and buildings. I was not satisfied with the Mahotsava this year. What it should be is a grand mixture of all the different phases here. We shall try it next year—I shall send instructions. With love to all of you there and blessings,

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[1] *Prabuddha Bhārata.*

[2] The Holy Mother, Shri Sarada Devi.

VIVEKANANDA.

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DARJEELING,
29th April, 1898.

MY DEAR JOE JOE,

I have had several attacks of fever, the last being influenza. It has left me now, only I am very weak yet. As soon as I gather strength enough to undertake the journey. I come down to Calcutta.

On Sunday I leave Darjeeling, probably stopping for a day or two at Kurseong, then direct to Calcutta. Calcutta must be very hot just now. Never mind, it is all the better for influenza. In case the plague breaks out in Calcutta, I must not go anywhere; and you start for Kashmir with Sadananda. How did you like the old gentleman, Devendra Nath Tagore? Not as stylish as "Hans Baba" with Moon God and Sun God of course. What enlightens your insides on a dark night when the Fire God, Sun God, Moon God, and Star Goddesses have gone to sleep? It is hunger that keeps my consciousness up, I have discovered. Oh, the great doctrine of correspondence of light! Think how dark the world has been all these ages without it! And all this knowledge and love and work and all the Buddhas and Krishnas and Christs—vain, vain have been their lives and work, for they did not discover *that* "which keeps the inner light when the Sun and Moon were gone to the limbo" for the night! Delicious, isn't it?

If the plague comes to my native city, I am determined to make myself a sacrifice, and that I am sure is a "Darn sight, better way to Nirvâna" than pouring oblations to all that ever twinkled.

I have had a good deal of correspondence with Madras with the result that I need not send them any help just now. On the other hand I am going to start a paper in Calcutta. I will be ever so much obliged if you help me starting that. As always, with undying love.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

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ALMORA,
10th June, 1898.

MY DEAR FRIEND,[1]

I appreciate your letter very much and am extremely happy to learn that the Lord is silently preparing wonderful things for our motherland.

Whether we call it Vedantism or any *ism*, the truth is that Advaitism is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religions and sects with love. I believe it is the religion of the future enlightened humanity. The Hindus may get the credit of arriving at it earlier than other races, they being an older race than either the Hebrew or the Arab; yet practical Advaitism, which looks upon and behaves to all mankind as one's own soul, was never developed among the Hindus.

On the other hand, my experience is that if ever any religion approached to this equality in an appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone.

Therefore, I am firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonizing the Vedas, the Bible, and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.

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[1] Mohammed Sarfaraz Husain of Naini Tal.

For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope.

I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body.

Ever praying that the Lord may make of you a great instrument for the help of mankind, and especially of our poor, poor motherland.

Yours with love,
VIVEKANANDA.

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SRINAGAR,
17th July, 1898.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I got all the news from your letter. . . . My opinion regarding what you have written about Sarada is only that it is difficult to make a magazine in Bengali paying; but if all of you together canvass subscribers from door to door, it may be possible. In this matter do as you all decide. Poor Sarada has already been disappointed once. What harm is there if we lose a thousand rupees by supporting such an unselfish and very hard-working person? What about the printing of *Raja-Yoga*? As a last resort, you may give it to Upen on certain terms of sharing the profits in the sales. . . . About money matters, the advice given previously is final. Henceforward do what you consider best regarding expenditure and other things. I see very well that my policy is wrong, and yours is correct, regarding helping others; that is to say, if you help with money too much at a time, people instead of feeling grateful remark on the contrary that they have got a simpleton to bank upon. I always lost sight of the demoralising influence of charity on the receiver. Secondly, we have no right to deviate even slightly from the purposes for which we collect the donations. Mrs. Bull will get her rosary all right if you send it care of Chief Justice Rishibar Mukhopadhyaya, Kashmir. Mr. Mitra and the Chief Justice are taking every care of them. We could not get a plot of ground in Kashmir yet, but there is a chance that we shall do so soon. If you can spend a winter here, you are sure to recoup your health. If the house is a good one and if you have enough fuel and warm clothing, then life in a land of snow is nothing but enjoyable. Also for stomach troubles a cold climate is an unfailing remedy. Bring Yogen with you; for the earth here is not stony, it is clay like that of Bengal.

If the paper[1] is brought out in Almora, the work will progress much; for poor Sevier will have something to do, and the local people also will get some work. Skilful management lies in giving every man work after his own heart. By all the means in our power the Nivedita Girls' School in Calcutta should be put on a firm footing. To bring Master Mahashay to Kashmir is still a far cry, for it will be long before a college is established here. But he has written that it is possible to start a college in Calcutta, with him as the principal, at an initial expense of a thousand rupees. I hear that you all also favour this proposal. In this matter do what you all consider best. My health is all right. I have to get up seldom at night, even though I take twice a day rice and potatoes, sugar, or whatever I get. Medicine is useless—it has no action on the system of a knower of Brahman! Everything will be digested —don't be afraid.

The ladies are doing well, and they send you their greetings. Two letters from Shivananda have come. I have also received a letter from his Australian disciple. I hear that the outbreak of plague in Calcutta has completely subsided.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] *Prabuddha Bhārata*, whose Editor, Rajam Iyer of Madras, had died.

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SRINAGAR,
1st August, 1898.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

You are always under a delusion, and it does not leave you because of the strong influence, good or bad, of other brains. It is this: whenever I write to you about accounts, you feel that I have no confidence in you. . . . My great anxiety is this: the work has somehow been started, but it should go on and progress even when we are not here; such thoughts worry me day and night. Any amount of theoretical knowledge one may have; but unless one does the thing actually, nothing is learnt. I refer repeatedly to election, accounts, and discussion so that everybody may be prepared to shoulder the work. If one man dies, another—why another only, ten if necessary—should be ready to take it up. Secondly, if a man's interest in a thing is not roused, he will not work wholeheartedly; all should be made to understand that everyone has a share in the work and property, and a voice in the management. This should be done while there is yet time. Give a responsible position to everyone alternately, but keep a watchful eye so that you can control when necessary; thus only can men be trained for the work. Set up such a machine as will go on automatically, no matter who dies or lives. We Indians suffer from a great defect, viz we cannot make a permanent organization—and the reason is that we never like to share power with others and never think of what will come after we are gone.

I have already written everything regarding the plague. Mrs. Bull and Miss Müller and others are of opinion that it is not desirable to spend money uselessly when hospitals have been started in every Ward. We lend our services as nurses and the like. Those that pay the piper must command the tune.

The Maharaja of Kashmir has agreed to give us a plot of land. I have also visited the site. Now the matter will be finalized in a few days, if the Lord wills. Right now, before leaving, I hope to build a small house here. I shall leave it in the charge of Justice Mukherjee when departing. Why not come here with somebody else and spend a winter? Your health will improve, and a need, too, will be fulfilled. The money I have set apart for the press[1] will be sufficient for the purpose, but all will be as you decide. This time I shall surely get some money from N. W. P., Rajputana and other places. Well, give as directed . . . money to a few persons. I am borrowing this amount from the Math and will pay it back to you with interest.

My health is all right in a way. It is good news that the building work[2] has begun. My love to all.

Yours affectionately,..
VIVEKANANDA.

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KASHMIR,
25th August, 1898.

DEAR ——,

It is a lazy life I am leading for the last two months, floating leisurely in a boat, which is also my home, up and down the beautiful Jhelum, through the most gorgeous scenery God's world can afford, in nature's own park, where the earth, air, land, grass, plants, trees, mountains, snows, and the human form all express, on the outside at least, the beauty of the Lord—with almost no possessions, scarcely a pen or an ink-stand even, snatching up a meal whenever or wherever convenient, the very ideal of a Rip Van Winkle! . . .

Do not work yourself out. It is no use; always remember—"Duty is the midday sun whose fierce rays are burning the very vitals of humanity." It is necessary for a time as a discipline; beyond that, it is a morbid dream. Things go on all right whether we lend them our helping hands or not. We in delusion only break ourselves. There is a false sentiment which goes the extreme of unselfishness, only to injure others by its submission to every evil. We have no right to make others selfish by our unselfishness; have we? . . .

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[1] For the Bengali magazine.
[2] For the new monastery at Belur.

Your etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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DEOGHAR, VAIDYANATH,
3rd January, 1899.

DEAR MOTHER,[1]

Some very important questions have been raised in your letter. It is not possible to answer them fully in a short note, still I reply to them as briefly as possible.

(1) Rishi, Muni, or God—none has power to force an institution on society. When the needs of the times press hard on it, society adopts certain customs for self-preservation. Rishis have only recorded those customs. As a man often resorts even to such means as are good for immediate self-protection but which are very injurious in the future, similarly, society also not unfrequently saves itself for the time being, but these immediate means which contributed to its preservation turn out to be terrible in the long run.

For example, take the prohibition of widow-marriage in our country. Don't think that Rishis or wicked men introduced the law pertaining to it. Notwithstanding the desire of men to keep women completely under their control, they never could succeed in introducing those laws without betaking themselves to the aid of a social necessity of the time. Of this custom two points should be specially observed.

(*a*) Widow-marriage takes place among the lower classes.

(*b*) Among the higher classes the number of women is greater than that of men.

Now, if it be the rule to marry every girl, it is difficult enough to get one husband apiece; then how to get, in succession, two or three for each? Therefore has society put one party under disadvantage, i.e. it does not let her have a second husband, who has had one; if it did, one maid would have to go without a husband. On the other hand, widow-marriage obtains in communities having a greater number of men than women, as in their case the objection stated above does not exist. It is becoming more and more difficult in the West, too, for unmarried girls to get husbands.

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[1] Shrimati Mrinalini Bose.

Similar is the case with the caste system, and other social customs.

So, if it be necessary to change any social custom, the *necessity* underlying it should be found out first of all, and by altering it, the custom will die of itself. Otherwise no good will be done by condemnation or praise.

(2) Now the question is: Is it for the good of the public at large that social rules are framed, or society is formed? Many reply to this in the affirmative; some, again, may hold that it is not so. Some men, being comparatively powerful, slowly bring all others under their control and by stratagem, force, or adroitness gain their own objects. If this be true, what can be the meaning of the statement that there is danger in giving liberty to the ignorant? What, again, is the meaning of liberty?

Liberty does not certainly mean the absence of obstacles in the path of misappropriation of wealth, etc. by you and me, but it is our natural right to be allowed to use our own body, intelligence, or wealth according to our will, without doing any harm to others; and all the members of a society ought to have the same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education, or knowledge. The second question is: Those who say that if the ignorant and the poor be given liberty, i.e. full right to their body, wealth, etc., and if their children have the same opportunity to better their condition and acquire knowledge as those of the rich and the highly situated, they would become perverse —do they say this for the good of society, or blinded by their selfishness? In England too I have heard, "Who will serve us if the lower classes get education?"

For the luxury of a handful of the rich, let millions of men and women remain submerged in the hell of want and abysmal depth of ignorance, for if they get wealth and education, society will be upset!

Who constitute society? The millions—or you, I, and a few others of the upper classes?

Again, even if the latter be true, what ground is there for our vanity that we lead others? Are we omniscient? उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं —"One should raise the self by the self." Let each one work out one's own salvation. Freedom in all matters, i.e. advance towards Mukti, is the worthiest gain of man. To advance oneself towards freedom—physical, mental, and spiritual—and help others to do so, is the supreme prize of man. Those social rules which stand in the way of the unfoldment of this freedom are injurious, and steps should be taken to destroy them speedily. Those institutions should be encouraged by which men advance in the path of freedom.

That in this life we feel a deep love at first sight towards a particular person who may not be endowed with extraordinary qualities, is explained by the thinkers of our country as due to the associations of a past incarnation.

Your question regarding the will is very interesting: it is the subject to know. The essence of all religions is the annihilation of desire, along with which comes, of a certainty, the annihilation of the will as well, for desire is only the name of a particular mode of the will. Why, again, is this world? Or why are these manifestations of the will? Some religions hold that the evil will should be destroyed and not the good. The denial of desire here would be compensated by enjoyments hereafter. This reply does not of course satisfy the wise. The Buddhists, on the other hand, say that desire is the cause of misery, its annihilation is quite desirable. But like killing a man in the effort to kill the mosquito on his cheek, they have gone to the length of annihilating their own selves in their efforts to destroy misery according to the Buddhistic doctrine.

The fact is, what we call will is an inferior modification of something higher. Desirelessness means the disappearance of the inferior modification in the form of will and the appearance of that superior state. That state is beyond the range of mind and intellect. Though the look of the gold mohur is quite different from that of the rupee and the pice, yet as we know for certain that the gold mohur is greater than either, so, that highest state, Mukti or Nirvâna, call it what you like, though out of the reach of the mind and intellect, is greater than the will and all other powers. It is no power, but power is its modification, therefore it is higher. Now, you will see that the result of the proper exercise of the will, first with motive for an object and then without motive, is that the will-power will attain a much higher state.

In the preliminary state, the form of the Guru is to be meditated upon by the disciple. Gradually it is to be merged in the Ishta. By Ishta is meant the object of love and devotion. . . .

It is very difficult to superimpose divinity on man, but one is sure to succeed by repeated efforts. God is in every man, whether man knows it or not; your loving devotion is bound to call up the divinity in him.

Ever your well-wisher,
VIVEKANANDA.

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BELUR MATH,
16th April, 1899.

DEAR MADAM,[1]

Very glad to receive your kind note. If by the sacrifice of some specially cherished object of either myself or my brother-disciples many pure and genuinely patriotic souls come forward to help our cause, rest assured, we will not hesitate in the least to make that sacrifice, nor shed a tear-drop—you will see this verified in action. But up till now I have seen nobody coming forward to assist in this way. Only some have wished to put their own hobby in place of ours—that is all. If it really help our country, or humanity—not to speak of giving up Guru-worship—believe me, we are prepared to commit any dire iniquity and suffer the eternal damnation of the Christians. But my hairs have turned grey since I began the study of man.

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[1] Shrimati Sarala Ghoshal, Editor of *Bhârati.*

This world is a most trying place, and it is long since I have taken to wandering with the lantern of the Grecian Philosopher in hand. A popular song my Master often used to sing comes to my mind:

> "He who's a man after one's heart
> Betrays himself by his very looks.
> Rare indeed is such a one!
> He's a man of aesthetic perceptions
> Who treads a path contrary to others."

This much from my side. Please know that not one word of it is exaggerated—which you will find to be actually the case.

But then I have some doubts about those patriotic souls who can join with us if only we give up the worship of the Guru. Well, if, as they pose, they are indeed panting and struggling so much—almost to the point of dissolution from their body—to serve the country, how can the single accident of Guru-worship stop everything!

This impetuous river with rolling waves which bade fair to sweep away while hills and mountains—was a bit of Guru-worship sufficient to turn it back to the Himalayas! I put it to you, do you think anything great will come of such patriotism, or any substantial good proceed from such assistance! It is for you to say; I can make nothing out of it. For a thirsty man to weigh so much the merits of water, or for a man about to die of hunger to cogitate so much and turn up his nose at the food presented! Well, people have strange ways of thinking. I, for one, am inclined to think that those people were best in a glass-case; the more they keep away from actual work, the better.

> "Love stops not for questions of birth.
> Nor the hungry man for stale food."

This is what I know. But I may be wholly mistaken. Well, if this trifle of Guru-worship serves as a stone to choke one to death, we had better extricate him from this predicament.

However, I have a great longing to talk over these points with you in detail.

For talking these things over, disease, affliction, and death have given me leave till now, and I hope they will do so yet.

May all your wishes be fulfilled in this New Year!

Yours sincerely,
VIVEKANANDA.

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C/o MISS NOBLE,
21A, HIGH STREET, WIMBLEDON,
August, 1899.

MY DEAR MARIE,

I am in London again. This time not busy, not hustling about but quietly settled down in a corner—waiting to start for the U. S. America on the first opportunity. My friends are nearly all out of London in the country and elsewhere, and my health not sufficiently strong.

So you are happy in the midst of your lakes and gardens and seclusion in Canada. I am glad, so glad to know that you are up again on top of the tide. May you remain there for ever!

You could not finish the *Raja-Yoga* translation yet—all right, there is no hurry. Time and opportunity must come if it is to be done, you know, otherwise we vainly strive.

Canada must be beautiful now, with its short but vigorous summer, and very healthy.

I expect to be in New York in a few weeks, and don't know what next. I hope to come back to England next spring.

I fervently wish no misery ever came near any one; yet it is that alone that gives us an insight into the depths of our lives, does it not?

In our moments of anguish, gates barred for ever seem to open and let in many a flood of light.

We learn as we grow. Alas! we cannot use our knowledge here. The moment we seem to learn, we are hurried off the stage. And this is Mâyâ!

This toy world would not be here, this play could not go on, if we were knowing players. We must play blindfolded some of us have taken the part of the rogue of the play, some heroic—never mind it is all play. This is the only consolation. There are demons and lions and tigers and what not on the stage, but they are all muzzled. They snap, but cannot bite. The world cannot touch our souls. If you want, even if the body is torn and bleeding, you may enjoy the greatest peace in your mind.

And the way to that is to attain hopelessness. Do you know that? Not the imbecile attiude of despair, but the contempt of the conqueror for things he has attained, for things he struggled for and then throws aside as beneath his worth.

This hopelessness, desirelessness, aimlessness is just the harmony with nature. In nature there is no harmony, no reason, no sequence, it was chaos before, it is so still.

The lowest man is in consonance with nature in his earthyheadness; the highest the same in the fullness of knowledge. All three aimless, drifting, hopeless—all three happy.

You want a chatty letter, don't you? I have not much to chat about. Mr. Sturdy came last two days. He goes home in Wales tomorrow.

I have to book my passage of N. Y. in a day or two.

None of my old friends have I seen yet except Miss Souter and Max Gysic, who are in London. They have been very kind, as they always were.

I have no news to give you, as I know nothing of London yet. I don't know where Gertrude Orchard is, else would have written to her. Miss Kate Steel is also away. She is coming on Thursday or Saturday.

I had an invitation to stay in Paris with a friend, a very well-educated Frenchman, but I could not go this time. I hope another time to live with him some days.

I expect to see some of our old friends and say good day to them.

I hope to see you in America sure. Either I may unexpectedly turn up in Ottawa in my peregrinations or you come to N. Y.

Good-bye, all luck be yours.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA

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LONDON,
10th August, 1899.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I got a lot of news from your letter. My health was much better on the ship, but, after landing, owing to flatulence, it is rather bad now. . . . There is a lot of difficulty here—all friends have gone out of town for the summer. In addition my health is not so good, and there is a lot of inconvenience regarding food, etc. So in a few days I leave for America. Send an account to Mrs. Bull as to how much was spent on purchase of land, how much on buildings, how much on maintenance, etc.

Sarada writes that the magazine (Bengali *Udbodhan*) is not going well. . . . Let him publish the account of my travels, and thoroughly advertise it beforehand—he will have subscribers rushing in. Do people like a magazine if three-fourths of it are filled with pious stuff? Anyway pay special attention to the magazine. Mentally take it as though I were not. Act independently on this basis. "We depend on the elder brother for money, learning, everything"—such an attitude is the road to ruin. If all the money even for the magazine is to be collected by me and all the articles too are from my pen—what will you all do? What are our Sahibs then doing? I have finished my part. You do what remains to be done. Nobody is there to collect a single penny, nobody to do any preaching, none has brains enough to take proper care of his own affairs, none has the capacity to write one line, and all are saints for nothing! . . . If this be your condition, then for six months give everything into the hands of the boys—magazine, money, preaching work, etc. If they are also not able to do anything, then sell off everything, and returning the proceeds to the donors go about as mendicants. I get no news at all from the Math. What is Sharat doing? I want to see work done. Before dying, I want to see that what I have established as a result of my lifelong struggle is put in a more or less running condition. Consult the Committee in every detail regarding money matters. Get the signatures of the Committee for every item of expenditure. Otherwise you also will be in for a bad name. This much is customary that people want some time or other account of their donations. It is very wrong not to have it ready at every turn. . . . By such lethargy in the beginning, people finally become cheats. Make a committee of all those who are in the Math, and no expenditure will be made which is not countersigned by them—none at all! I want work, I want vigour—no matter who lives or dies. What are death and life to a Sannyasin?

If Sharat cannot rouse up Calcutta, . . . if you are not able to construct the embankment this year, then you will see the fun! I want work—no humbug about it. My respectful salutations to the Holy Mother.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

183

RIDGELY,
2nd September, 1899.

DEAR——,

. . . Life is a series of fights and disillusionments. . . . The secret of life is not enjoyment, but education through experience. But, alas, we are called off the moment we begin really to learn! That seems to be a potent argument for a future existence. . . . Everywhere it is better to have a whirlwind come over the work. That clears the atmosphere and gives us a true insight into the nature of things. It is begun anew, but on adamantine foundations. . . .

Yours with best wishes,
VIVEKANANDA.

184

Ridgely Manor,
14th September, 1899.

My dear Sturdy,

I have simply been taking rest at the Leggetts' and doing nothing. Abhedananda is here. He has been working hard.

He goes in a day or two to resume his work in different places for a month. After that he comes to New York to work.

I am trying to do something in the line you suggested, but don't know how far an account of the Hindus will be appreciated by the Western public when it comes from a Hindu. . . .

Mrs. Johnson is of opinion that no spiritual person ought to be ill. It also seems to her now that my smoking is sinful etc., etc. That was Miss Müller's reason for leaving me—my illness. They may be perfectly right, for aught I know—and you too, but I am what I am. In India, the same defects plus eating with Europeans have been taken exception to by many. I was driven out of a private temple by the owners for eating with Europeans. I wish I were malleable enough to be moulded into whatever one desired, but unfortunately I never saw a man who could satisfy everyone. Nor can anyone who has to go to different places possibly satisfy all.

When I first came to America, they ill-treated me if I had not trousers on. Next I was forced to wear cuffs and collars, else they would not touch me, etc., etc. They thought me awfully funny if I did not eat what they offered etc., etc. . . .

In India the moment I landed, they made me shave my head, and wear "Kaupin" (loin cloth), with the result that I got diabetes, etc. Saradananda never gave up his underwear—this saved his life, with just a touch of rheumatism and much comment from our people.

Of course, it is my Karma, and I am glad that it is so. For, though it smarts for the time, it is another great experience of life, which will be useful, either in this or in the next. . . .

As for me, I am always in the midst of ebbs and flows. I knew it always and preached always that every bit of pleasure will bring its quota of pain, if not with compound interest. I have a good deal of love given to me by the world; I deserve a good deal of hatred therefore. I am glad it is so—as it proved my theory of "Every wave having its corresponding dip" on my own person.

As for me, I stick to my nature and principle—once a friend, always a friend—also the true Indian principle of looking subjectively for the cause of the objective.

I am sure that the fault is mine, and mine only, for every wave of dislike and hatred that I get. It could not be otherwise. Thanking you and Mrs. Jonhson for thus calling me once more to the internal.

I remain as ever, with love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

185

RIDGELY MANOR,
30th October, 1899.

MY DEAR OPTIMIST,[1]

I received your letter and am thankful that something has come to force optimistic *laissez faire* into action. Your questions have tapped the very source of pessimism, however. British rule in modern India has only one redeeming feature, though unconscious; it has brought India out once more on the stage of the world; it has forced upon it the contact of the outside world. If it had been done with an eye to the good of the people concerned, as circumstances favoured Japan with, the results would have been more wonderful for India. No good can be done when the main idea is blood-sucking. On the whole the old regime was better for the people, as it *did not* take away everything they had, and there was some justice, some liberty.

A few hundred, modernized, half-educated, and denationalised men are all the show of modern English India—*nothing*

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[1] Miss Mary Hale.

else. The Hindus were 600 million in number according to Ferishta, the Mohammedan historian, in the 12th century—now less than 200 million.

In spite of the centuries of anarchy that reigned during the struggles of the English to conquer, the terrible massacre the English perpetrated in 1857 and 1858, and the still more terrible famines that have become the inevitable consequence of British rule (there never is a famine in a native state) and that take off millions, there has been a good increase of population, but not yet what it was when the country was entirely independent—that is, before the Mohammedan rule. Indian labour and produce can support five times as many people as there are now in India with comfort, if the whole thing is not taken off from them.

This is the state of things—even education will no more be permitted to spread; freedom of the press stopped already, (of course we have been disarmed long ago) the bit of self-government granted to them for some years is being quickly taken off. We are watching what next! For writing a few words of innocent criticism, men are being hurried to *transportation for life,* others imprisoned without *any trial*; and nobody knows when his head will be off.

There has been a reign of terror in India for some years. English soldiers are killing our men and outraging our women—only to be sent home with passage and pension at our expense. We are in a *terrible* gloom—where is the Lord? Mary, you can afford to be optimistic, can I? Suppose you simply publish this letter—the law just passed in India will allow the English Government in India to drag me from here to India and kill me without trial. And I know all your Christian Governments will only rejoice because we are heathens. Shall I also go to sleep and become optimistic? Nero was the greatest optimistic person! They don't think it worth while to write these terrible things as news items even! If necessary the news agent of *Reuter* gives the exactly opposite news fabricated to order! Heathen-murdering is only a legitimate pastime for the Christians! Your missionaries go to preach God and dare not speak a word of truth for fear of the English, who will kick them out the next day.

All property and lands granted by the previous governments for supporting education have been swallowed up, and the present government spends even less than Russia on education. And what education?

The least show of originality is throttled. Mary, it is hopeless with us, unless there really is a God who is the father of all, who is not afraid of the strong to protect the weak, and who is not bribed by wealth: is there such a God? Time will show.

Well, I think I am coming to Chicago in a few weeks and talk of things fully! Don't quote your authority.

With love, ever your brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. As for religious sects—the B—S—, the A—S—, and other sects have been useless mixtures; they were only voices of apology to our English masters to allow us to live! We have started a *new India--a growth*—waiting to see what comes. We believe in new ideas only when the nation wants them, and what will be true for us. The test of truth for these B—S—is "what our masters approve"; with us, what the Indian reasoning and experience approves. The struggle has begun—not between the B—S—and us, for they are gone already, but a harder, deeper, and more terrible one.

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C/o F. LEGGETT, ESQ.,
RIDGELY MANOR,
ULSTER COUNTY, N. Y.

MY DEAR STURDY,

Your last letter reached me after knocking about a little through insufficient address.

It is quite probable that very much of your criticism is just and correct. It is also possible that some day you may find that all this springs from your dislike of certain persons, and I was the scapegoat.

There need be no bitterness, however, on that account, as I don't think I ever posed for anything but what I am. Nor is it ever possible for me to do so, as an hour's contact is enough to make everybody see through my smoking, bad temper, etc. "Every meeting must have a separation"—this is the nature of things. I carry no feeling of disappointment even. I hope you will have no bitterness. It is Karma that brings us together and Karma separates.

I know how shy you are, and how loath to wound others' feelings. I perfectly understand months of torture in your mind, when you have been struggling to work with people who were so different from your ideal. I could not guess it before at all, else I could have saved you a good deal of unnecessary mental trouble. It is *Karma* again.

The accounts were not submitted before, as the work is not yet finished, and I thought of submitting to my donor a complete account when the whole thing was finished. The work was begun only last year, as we had to wait for funds a long time, and my method is never to ask but wait for voluntary help.

I follow the same idea in all my work, as I am so conscious of my nature being positively displeasing to many, and wait till somebody wants me. I hold myself ready also to depart at a moment's notice. In the matter of departure thus, I never feel bad about it or think much of it, as in the constant roving life I lead I am constantly doing it. Only so sorry I trouble others, without wishing it. Will you kindly send over if there is any mail for me at your address?

May all blessings attend you and yours for ever and ever will be the constant prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.

187

RIDGELY,
1st November, 1899.

DEAR MARGOT,

. . . It seems there is a gloom over your mind. Never mind, nothing is to last for ever. Anyhow life is not eternal I am so, so thankful for it. Suffering is the lot of the world s best and bravest—yet, for aeons yet—till things are righted, if possible, here—at least it is a discipline which breaks the dream. In my sane moments I rejoice for my sufferings. Some one must suffer here—I am glad it is I, amongst others of nature's sacrifices.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

188

C/o F. H. LEGGETT,
21, WEST THIRTY-FOURTH STREET,
NEW YORK,
November, 1899

MY DEAR STURDY,

This is not to defend my conduct. Words cannot wipe off the evils I have done, nor any censor stop from working the good deeds, if any.

For the last few months I have been hearing so much of the luxuries I was given to enjoy by the people of the West—luxuries which the hypocrite myself has been enjoying, although preaching renunciation all the while; luxuries, the enjoyment of which has been the great stumbling-block in my way, in England at least. I nearly hypnotised myself into the belief that there has at least been a little oasis in the dreary desert of my life, a little spot of light in one whole life of misery and gloom, one moment of relaxation in a life of hard work and harder curses—even that oasis, that spot, that moment was only one of sense-enjoyment!!

I was glad, I blessed a hundred times a day those that had helped me to get it, when, lo, your last letter comes like a thunderclap, and the dream is vanished. I begin to disbelieve your criticisms—have little faith left in all this talk of *luxuries* and enjoyments, and other visions memory calls up. These I state. Hope you will send it round to friends, if you think fit, and correct me where I am wrong.

I remember your place at Reading, where I was fed with boiled cabbage and potatoes and boiled rice and boiled lentils, three time a day, with your wife's curses for sauce all the time. I do not remember your giving me any cigar to smoke—shilling or penny ones. Nor do I remember myself as complaining of either the food or your wife's incessant curses, though I *lived as a thief*, shaking through fear all the time, and working every day for you.

The next memory is of the house on St. George's Road—you and Miss Müller at the head. My poor brother was ill there and . . . drove him away. There, too, I don't remember to have had any luxuries as to food or drink or bed or even *the room given to me.*

The next was Miss Müller's place. Though she has been very kind to me, I was living on nuts and fruits. The next memory is that of the black hole of London where I had to work almost day and night and cook the meals oft-times for five or six, and most nights with a bite of bread and butter.

I remember Mrs.—giving me a dinner and a night's lodging in her place, and then the next day criticizing the black savage—so dirty and smoking all over the house.

With the exception of Capt. and Mrs. Sevier, I do not remember even one piece of rag as big as a handkerchief I got from England. On the other hand, the incessant demand on my body and mind in England is the cause of my breakdown in health. This was all you English people gave me, whilst working me to death, and now I am cursed for the luxuries I lived in!! Whosoever of you have given me a coat? Whosoever a cigar? Whosoever a bit of fish or flesh? Whosoever of you dare say, I asked food or drink or smoke or dress or money from you? Ask, Sturdy, as for God's sake, ask your friends, and first ask your own "God within who never sleeps".

You have given me money for my work. Every penny of it is there. Before your eyes I sent my brother away, perhaps to his death; and I would not give him a farthing of the money which was not my private property.

On the other hand, I remember in England Capt. and Mrs. Sevier, who have clad me when I was cold, nursed me better than my own mother would have, borne with me in my weaknesses, my trials; and they have nothing but blessings for me. And that Mrs. Sevier, because she did not care for honour, has the worship of thousands today; and when she is dead, millions will remember her as one of the great benefactresses of the poor Indians. And they never cursed me for my luxuries, though they are ready to give me luxuries, if I need or wish.

I need not tell you of Mrs. Bull, Miss Macleod, Mr. and Mrs. Leggett. You know their love and kindness for me, and Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod have been to our country, moved and lived with us as no foreigner ever did, roughing it all, and they do not ever curse me and my luxuries either; they will be only too glad to have me eat well and smoke dollar cigars if I wish. And these Leggetts and Bulls were the people whose bread I was eating, whose clothes were covering my back, whose money bought my smokes and several times paid my rent, whilst I was killing myself for your people, when you were taking *my pound of flesh* for the dirty hole and starvation and reserving all this accusation of luxury.

> "The clouds of autumn make great noise but send no rain;
> The clouds of the rainy season without a word flood the earth."

See Sturdy, those that have helped or are still helping have no criticism, no curses: it is only those who do nothing, who only come to grind their own axes, that curse, that criticise. That such worthless, heartless, selfish, rubbish criticise, is the greatest blessing that can come to me. I want nothing so much in life as to be miles off from these extremely selfish axe-grinders.

Talking of luxuries! Take these critics up one after the other—it is all flesh, all flesh and no spirit anywhere. Thank God, they come out sooner or later in their true colours. And you advise me to regulate my conduct, my work, according to the desires of such heartless, selfish persons, and are at your wit's end because I do not!

As to my Gurubhais (brother-disciples), they do nothing but what I insist on their doing. If they have shown any selfishness anywhere, that is because of my ordering them, not what they would do themselves.

Would you like your children put into that dark hole you got for me in London, made to work to death, and almost starved all the time? Would Mrs.——like that? They are Sannyasins, and that means, no Sannyasin should unnecessarily throw away his life or *undertake unnecessary hardship.*

In undergoing all this *hardship* in the West we have been only breaking the rules of Sannyasa. They are my brothers, my children. I do not want them to die in holes for my sake. I don't, by all that is good and true I don't, want them starved and worked and cursed for all their pains.

A word more. I shall be very glad if you can point out to me where I have preached torturing the flesh. As for the Shâstras (scriptures), I shall be only too glad if a Shâstri (Pundit) dares oppose us with the rules of life laid down for Sannyasins and Paramahamsas.

Well, Sturdy, my heart aches. I understand it all. I know what you are in—you are in the clutches of people who want to use you. I don't mean your wife. She is too simple to be dangerous. But, my poor boy, you have got the flesh-smell—a little money—and vultures are around. Such is life.

You said a lot about ancient India. That India still lives, —. is not dead, and that living India dares even today to deliver her meessage without fear or favour of the rich, without fear of anybody's opinion, either in the land where her feet are in chains or in the very face of those who hold the end of the chain, her rulers. That India still lives. . . .—India of undying love, of everlasting faithfulness, the unchangeable, not only in manners and customs, but also in love, in faith, in friendship. And I, the least of that India's children, love you, Sturdy, with *Indian* love, and would any day give up a thousand bodies to help you out of this delusion.

Ever yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

189*

U.S.A.,
20th November, 1899.

My dear Rakhal,

Got some news from Sharat's letter. . . . Get experience while still there is a chance; I am not concerned whether you win or lose. . . . I have no disease now. Again . . . I am going to tour from place to place. There is no reason for anxiety, be fearless. Everything will fly away before you; only don't be disobedient, and all success will be yours. . . . Victory to Kâli! Victory to the Mother! Victory to Kali! Wâh Guru, Wah Guru ki Fateh (Victory unto the Guru)!

. . . Really, there is no greater sin than cowardice; cowards are never saved—that is sure. I can stand everything else but not that. Can I have any dealings with one who will not give that up? . . . If one gets one blow, one must return ten with redoubled fury . . . then only one is a *man* . . . the coward is an object to be pitied.

I bless you all; today, on this day sacred to the Divine Mother, on this night, may the Mother dance in your hearts, and bring infinite strength to your arms. Victory to Kali! Victory to Kali! Mother will certainly come down—and with great strength will bring all victory, world victory. Mother is coming, what fear? Whom to fear? Victory to Kali! At the tread of each one of you the earth will tremble. . . . Victory to Kali! Again onward, forward! Wah Guru! Victory to the Mother! Kali! Kali! Kali! Disease, sorrow, danger, weakness—all these have departed from you all. All victory, all good fortune, all prosperity yours. Fear not! Fear not! The threat of calamity is vanishing, fear not! Victory to Kali! Victory to Kali!

Vivekananda.

P.S. I am the servant of the Mother, you are all servants of the Mother—what destruction, what fear is there for us? Don't allow egoism to enter your minds, and let love never depart from your hearts. What destruction can touch you? Fear not. Victory to Kali! Victory to Kali!

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21 WEST 34 ST.,
NEW YORK,
21st November, 1899.

MY DEAR BRAHMANANDA,

The accounts are all right. I have handed them over to Mrs. Bull who has taken charge of reporting the different parts of the accounts to different donors. Never mind what I have said in previous harsh letters. They would do you good. Firstly, they will make you business-like in the future to keep regular and clear accounts and get the brethren into it. Secondly, if these scoldings don't make you brave, I shall have no more hopes of you. I want to see you die even, but you must make a fight. Die in obeying commands like a soldier, and go to Nirvâna, but no cowardice.

It is necessary that I must disappear for some time. Let not any one write me or seek me during that time, it is absolutely necessary for my health. I am only nervous, that is all, nothing more.

All blessings follow you. Never mind my harshness. You know the heart always, whatever the lips say. All blessings on you. For the last year or so I have not been in my senses at all. I do not know why. I had to pass through this hell — and I have. I am much better—well, in fact. Lord help you all. I am going to the Himalayas soon to retire for ever. My work is done.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Mrs. Bull sends her love.

V.

191

Los Angeles,
6th December, 1899.

Dear Margot,

Your sixth has arrived, but with it yet no change in my fortune. Would change be any good, do you think? Some people are made that way, to love being miserable. If I did not break my heart over people I was born amongst, I would do it for somebody else. I am sure of that. This is the way of some, I am coming to see it. We are all after happiness, true, but that some are only happy in being unhappy—queer, is it not? There is no harm in it either, except that happiness and unhappiness are both infectious. Ingersoll said once that if he were God, he would make health catching, instead of disease, little dreaming that health is quite as catching as disease, if not more! That is the only danger. No harm in the world in my being happy, in being miserable, but others must not catch it. This is the great fact. No sooner a prophet feels miserable for the state of man than he sours his face, beats his breast, and calls upon everyone to drink tartaric acid, munch charcoal; sit upon a dung-heap covered with ashes and speak only in groans and tears!—I find they all have been wanting. Yes, they have. If you are really ready to take the world's burden, take it by all means. But do not let us hear your groans and curses. Do not frighten us with your sufferings, so that we come to feel we were better off with our own burdens. The man who really takes the burden blesses the world and goes his own way. He has not a word of condemnation, a word of criticism, not because there was no evil, but that he has taken it on his own shoulders willingly, voluntarily. It is the Saviour who should "go his way rejoicing, and not the saved".

This is the only light I have caught this morning. This is enough if it has come to live with me and permeate my life.

Come ye that are heavily laden and lay all your burden on me, and then do whatever you like and be happy and forget that I ever existed.

Ever with love,

Your father,
Vivekananda.

192

12th December, 1899.

My dear Mrs. Bull,

You are perfectly right, I am brutal, very indeed. But about the tenderness, etc., that is my fault; I wish I had less, much less of that—that is my weakness—and alas! all my sufferings have come from that. Well, the (Belur) municipality is trying to tax us out—good; that is my fault as I did not make the (Belur) Math public property by a deed of trust. I am very sorry I use harsh language to my boys; but they also know I love them more than anybody else on earth. I may have had Divine help—true; but oh, the pound of blood every bit of Divine help has been to me!! I would be gladder and a better man without that. The present looks very gloomy indeed; but I am a fighter and must die fighting, not give way—that is why I get crazy at the boys. I don't ask them to fight, but not to hinder my fight.

I don't grudge my fate. But oh! now I want a man, one of my boys, to stand by me and fight against all odds! Don't you vex yourself; if anything is to be done in India, my presence is necessary; and I am much better in health; possibly the sea will make me better. Anyway I did not do anything this time in America except bother my friends. Possibly Joe will help me out with the passage, and I have some money with Mr. Leggett. I have hopes of collecting some money in India yet. I did not see any of my friends in different parts of India. I have hope of collecting the fifteen thousand that will make up the fifty thousand, and a deed of trust will bring down the municipal taxes. If I cannot collect that—it is better to struggle and die for it than vegetate here in America. My mistakes have been great; but everyone of them was from too much love. How I hate *love*! Would I never had any Bhakti! Indeed, I wish I could be an Advaitist, calm and heartless. Well, this life is done. I will try in the next. I am sorry, especially now, that I have done more injury to my friends than there have been blessings on them. The peace, the quiet I am seeking, I never found.

I went years ago to the Himalayas, never to come back;

and my sister committed suicide, the news reached me there, and that weak heart flung me off from that prospect of peace!! It is the weak heart that has driven me out of India to seek some help for those I love, and here I am! Peace have I sought, but the heart, that seat of Bhakti, would not allow me to find it. Struggle and torture, torture and struggle! Well, be it then, since it is my fate, and the quicker it is over, the better. They say I am impulsive, but look at the circumstances!!! I am sorry I have been the cause of pain to you, to you above all, who love me so much, who have been so, so kind. But it is done—was a fact. I am now going to cut the knot or die in the attempt.

Ever your son,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. As Mother wants it, so let it be. I am going to beg of Joe a passage via San Francisco to India. If she gives it, I start immediately via Japan. It would take a month. In India, I think, I can raise some money to keep things straight or on a better footing—at least to leave things where I get them all muddled. The end is getting very dark and very much muddled; well, I expected it so. Don't think I give in a moment. Lord bless you, if the Lord has made me His hack to work and die on the streets, let Him have it. I am more cheerful just now after your letter, than I was for years—Wah Guru ki Fateh! Victory unto the Guru!! Yes, let the world come, the hells come, the gods come, let Mother come, I fight and do not give in. Râvana got his release in three births by fighting the Lord Himself! It is glorious to fight Mother.

All blessings on you and yours. You have done for me more, much more, than I deserved ever.

Love to Christine and Turiyananda.

VIVEKANANDA.

193

921 W. 21st Street,
Los Angeles,
27th December, 1899.

Beloved Dhira Mata,

An eventful and happy New Year to you and many such returns!

I am much better in health—able enough to work once more. I have started work already, and have sent to Saradananda some money—Rs. 1,300 already—as expenses for the law suit. I shall send more, if they need it. I had a very bad dream this morning and had not any news of Saradananda for three weeks. Poor boys! How hard I am on them at times. Well, they know in spite of all that, I am their best friend.

Mr. Leggett has got a little over £500 I had with Sturdy on account of *Raja-Yoga* and the Maharaja of Khetri. I have now about a thousand dollars with Mr. Leggett. If I die, kindly send that money to my mother. I wired to the boys three weeks ago that I was perfectly cured. If I don't get any worse, this much health as I have now will do well enough. Do not worry at all on my account; I am up and working with a will.

I am sorry I could not write any more of the stories. I have written some other things and mean to write something almost every day.

I am very much more peaceful, and find that the only way to keep my peace is to teach others. Work is my only safety valve.

I only want some clear business head to take care of the details as I push onwards and work on. I am afraid it will be a long time to find such in India, and if there are any, they ought to be educated by somebody from the West.

Again, I can only work when thrown completely on my own feet. I am at my best when I am alone. Mother seems to arrange so. Joe believes great things are brewing—in Mother's cup; hope it is so.

Joe and Margot have developed into actual prophets, it seems. I can only say, every blow I had in this life, every pang, will only become joyful sacrifice if Mother becomes propitious to India once more.

Miss Greenstidel writes a beautiful letter to me, about you most of it. She thinks a lot about Turiyananda too. Give Turiyananda my love. I am sure he will work well. He has the pluck and stamina.

I am going soon to work in California; when I leave I shall send for Turiyananda and make him work on the Pacific coast. I am sure here is a great field. The Raja-Yoga book seems to be very well known here. Miss Greenstidel has found great peace under your roof and is very happy. I am so glad it is so. May things go a little better with her every day. She has a good business head and practical sense.

Joe has unearthed a magnetic healing woman. We are both under her treatment. Joe thinks she is pulling me up splendidly. On her has been worked a miracle, she claims. Whether it is magnetic healing, California ozone, or the end of the present spell of bad Karma, I am improving. It is a great thing to be able to walk three miles, even after a heavy dinner.

All love and blessings to Olea. My love to Dr. Janes and other Boston friends.

Ever your son,
VIVEKANANDA.

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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA,
24th January, 1900.

DEAR MARGOT,

I am afraid that the rest and peace I seek for will never come. But Mother does good to others through me, at least some to my native land, and it is easier to be reconciled to one's fate as a sacrifice. We are all sacrifices—each in his own way. The great worship is going on—no one can see its meaning except that it is a great sacrifice. Those that are willing, escape a lot of pain. Those who resist are broken into submission and suffer more. I am now determined to be a willing one.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

195

PASADENA,
20th February, 1900.

MY DEAR MARY,

Your letter bearing the sad news of Mr. Hale's passing away reached me yesterday. I am sorry, because in spite of monastic training the heart lives on, and then Mr. Hale was one of the best souls I met in life. Of course you are sorry, miserable, and so is Mother Church and Harriet and the rest, especially as this is the first grief of its kind you have met, is it not? I have lost many, suffered much, and the most curious cause of suffering when somebody goes off is the feeling that I was not good enough to that person. When my father died, it was a pang for months, and I had been so disobedient.

You have been very dutiful; if you feel anything like that, it is only a form of sorrow.

Just now, I am afraid, life begins for you, Mary, in earnest. We may read books, hear lectures, and talk miles, but experience is the one teacher, the one eye-opener. It is best as it is. We learn, through smiles and tears we learn. We don't know why, but we see it is so; and that is enough. Of course Mother Church has the solace of her religion. I wish we could all dream undisturbed good dreams.

You have had shelter all your life. I was in the glare burning and panting all the time. Now for a moment you have caught a glimpse of the other side. My life is made up of continuous blows like that, and hundred times worse, because of poverty, treachery, and my own foolishness! Pessimism! You will understand it, how it comes. Well, well, what shall I say to you, Mary? You know all the talks; only I say this and it is true—if it were possible to exchange grief, and had I a cheerful mind, I would exchange mine for your grief ever and always. Mother knows best.

Your ever faithful brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

196*

CALIFORNIA,
21st February, 1900.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am very glad to receive your letter and go through the details of news. Learning and wisdom are superfluities, the surface glitter merely but it is the heart that is the seat of all power. It is not in the brain but in the heart that the Atman, possessed of knowledge, power, and activity, has Its seat. शतं चैका च हृदयस्य नाड्यः —"The nevers of the heart are a hundred and one", etc. The chief nerve-centre near the heart, called the sympathetic ganglia, is where the Atman has Its citadel. The more heart you will be able to manifest, the greater will be the victory you achieve. It is only a few that understand the language of the brain, but everyone, from the Creator down to a clump of grass, understands the language that comes from the heart. But then, in our country, it is a case of rousing men that are, as it were, dead. It will take time, but if you have infinite patience and perseverance, success is bound to come. No mistake in that.

How are the English officials to blame? Is the family, of whose unnatural cruelty you have written, an isolated one in India? Or are there plenty of such? It is the same story all the country over. But then, it is not as a result of pure wickodness that the selfishness commonly met with in our country has come. This bestial selfishness is the outcome of centuries of failure and repression. It is not real selfishness, but deep-rooted despair. It will be cured at the first inkling of success. It is only this that the English officials are noticing all round; so how can they have faith at the very outset? But tell me, do they not sympathize with any real work that they meet with? . . .

In these days of dire famine, flood, disease, and pestilence, tell me where your Congressmen are. Will it do merely to say, "Hand the government of the country over to us"? And who is there to listen to them? If a man does work, has he to open his mouth to ask for anything? If there be two thousand people like you working in several districts, won't it be the turn of the English themselves to consult you in matters of political moment? स्वकार्यमुद्धरेत् प्राज्ञः —"The wise man should achieve his object." . . . A——was not allowed to open a centre, but what of that! Has not Kishengarh allowed it?—Let him work on without ever opening his lips, there is no use of either telling anything to anybody, or quarrelling with any. Whoever will assist in this work of the Divine Mother of the universe, will have Her grace, and whoever will oppose it will not only be— अकारणाविष्कृतवैरदारुण —"raising a deadly enemy for nothing", but also laying the axe to his own prospects. शनैः पन्थाः etc.—all in good time. Many a little makes a mickle. When a great work is being done, when the foundations are laid or a road constructed, when superhuman energy is needed—it is one or two extraordinary men who silently and noiselessly work through a world of obstacles and difficulties. When thousands of people are benefited, there is a great tomtoming, and the whole country is loud in notes of praise. But, then the machine has already been set agoing, and even a boy can work it, or a fool add to it some impetus. Grasp this that, that benefit done to a village or two, that orphanage with its twenty orphans, those ten or twenty workers—all these are enough, they form the nucleus, never to be destroyed. From these, hundreds of thousands of people will be benefited in time. Now we want half a dozen lions, then excellent work will be turned out by even hundreds of jackals. . . .

If orphan girls happen to come to your hands for shelter, you must take them in above all else. Otherwise, Christian missionaries will take them, poor things, away! What matters it that you have no particular arrangements for them? Through the Divine Mother's will, they will be provided for.

When you get a horse, never you worry about the whip. . . . Get together whomsoever you can lay your hands on, no picking and choosing now—everything will be set right in course of time. In every attempt there are many obstacles to cope with, but gradually that path becomes smooth.

Convey to the European officer many thanks from me. Work on fearlessly—there is a hero! Bravo! Thrice well done! The starting of a centre at Bhagalpur that you have written about is no doubt a good idea—enlightening the schoolboys and things of that sort. But our mission is for the destitute, the poor, and the illiterate peasantry and labouring classes, and if after everything has been done for them first, there is spare time, then only for the gentry. Those peasants and labouring people will be won over by love. Afterwards it will be they who will collect small sums and start missions at their own villages, and gradually, from among those very men, teachers will spring.

Teach some boys and girls of the peasant classes the rudiments of learning and infuse a number of ideas into their brains. Afterwards the peasants of each village will collect funds and have one of these in their village. उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानम् —"One must raise oneself by one's own exertions"—this holds good in all spheres. We help them to help themselves. That they are supplying you with your daily bread is a real bit of work done. This moment they will come to understand their own condition and feel the necessity of help and improvement, know that your work is taking effect and is in the right direction. While the little good that the moneyed classes, out of pity, do to the poor, does not last, and ultimately it does nothing but harm to both parties. The peasants and labouring classes are in a moribund condition, so what is needed is that the moneyed people will only help them to regain their vitality, and nothing more. Then leave the peasants and labourers to look to their own problem, to grapple with and solve it. But then you must take care not to set up class-strife between the poor peasants, the labouring people, and wealthy classes. Make it a point not to abuse the moneyed classes. स्वकार्यमुद्धरेत्प्राज्ञः —"The wise man should achieve his own object".

Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Mother of the Universe!

What fear! Opportunity, remedy, and its application will present themselves. I do not care about the result, well or ill. I shall be happy if only you do this much of work. Wordy warfares, texts and scriptures, doctrines and dogmas—all these I am coming to loathe as poison in this my advanced age. Know this for certain that he who will work will be the crown on my head. Useless bandying of words and making noise is taking away our time, is consuming our life-energy, without pushing the cause of humanitarianism a step farther. माभैः—Away with fear! Bravo! There is a hero indeed! May the blessed Guru be enthroned in your heart, and the Divine Mother guide your hands.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

197

SAN FRANCISCO,
4th March, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

I don't want to work. I want to be quiet, and rest. I know the time and the place; but the fate or Karma, I think, drives me on—work, work. We are like cattle driven to the slaughter-house—hastily nibbling a bite of grass on the roadside as they are driven along under the whip. And all this is our work, our fear—fear, the beginning of misery, of disease, etc. By being nervous and fearful we injure others. By being so fearful to hurt we hurt more. By trying so much to avoid evil we fall into its jaws.

What a mass of namby-pamby nonsense we create round ourselves!! It does us no good, it leads us on to the very thing we try to avoid—misery. . . .

Oh, to become fearless, to be daring to be careless of everything! . . .

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

198*

SAN FRANCISCO,
12th March, 1900.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I got a letter from you some time ago. A letter from Sharat reached me yesterday. I saw a copy of the invitation letters for the birthday anniversary of Gurudeva. I am frightened hearing that Sharat is troubled by rheumatism. Alas, sickness, sorrow, and pain have been my companions for the last two years. Tell Sharat that I am not going to work so hard any more. But he who does not work enough to earn his food will have to starve to death! . . . I hope Durgaprasanna has done by this time whatever was necessary for the compound wall. . . . The raising of a compound wall is not, after all, a difficult thing. If I can, I shall build a small house there, and serve my old grandmother and mother. Evil actions leave none scot-free; Mother never spares anybody. I admit my actions have been wrong. Now, brother, all of you are Sâdhus and great saints, kindly pray to the Mother that I do not have to shoulder all this trouble and burden any longer. Now I desire a little peace; it seems there is no more strength left to bear the burden of work and responsibility. Rest and peace for the few days that I shall yet live. Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru! . . . No more lectures or anything of that sort. Peace!

As soon as Sharat sends the trust-deed of the Math, I shall put my signature to it. You all manage—truly I require rest. This disease is called neurasthenia, a disease of the nerves. Once it comes, it continues for some years. But after a complete rest for three or four years it is cured. This country is the home of the disease, and here it has caught me. However, it is not only no fatal disease, but it makes a man live long. Don't be anxious on my account. I shall go on rolling. But there is only this sorrow, that the work of Gurudeva is not progressing; there is this regret, that I have not been able to accomplish anything of his work. How much I abuse you all and speak harshly! I am the worst of men! Today, on the anniversary of his birthday, put the dust of your feet on my head—and my mind will become steady again. Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru! You are my only refuge—you are my only refuge! Now that my mind is steady, let me tell you that this resignation is the permanent attitude of my mind. All other moods that come are, you should know, only disease. Please don't allow me to work at all any longer. Now I shall quietly do Japa and meditation for some time—nothing more. Mother knows all else. Victory to the Mother of the Universe!

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

199

1719, TURK STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO,
22nd March, 1900.

MY DEAR MARY,

Many thanks for your kind note. You are correct that I have many other thoughts to think besides Indian people; but they have all to go to the background before the all-absorbing mission—my Master's work.

I would that this sacrifice were pleasant. It is not, and naturally makes one bitter at times; for know, Mary, I am yet a man and cannot wholly forget myself; hope I shall some time. Pray for me.

Of course I am not to be held responsible for Miss MacLeod's or Miss Noble's or anybody else's views regarding myself or anything else, am I? You never found me smart under criticism.

I am glad you are going over to Europe for a long period. Make a long tour, you have been long a house-dove.

As for me, I am tired on the other hand of eternal tramping; that is why I want to go back home and be quiet. I do not want to work any more. My nature is the retirement of a scholar. I never get it! I pray I will get it now that I am all broken and worked out. Whenever I get a letter from Mrs. Sevier from her Himalayan home, I feel like flying off to the Himalayas. I am really sick of this platform work and eternal trudging and seeing new faces and lecturing.

You need not bother about getting up classes in Chicago. I am getting money in Frisco and will soon make enough for my passage home.

How are you and the sisters? I expect to come to Chicago some time towards the first part of April.

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

200

SAN FRANCISCO,
25th March, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

I am much better and am growing very strong. I feel sometimes that freedom is near at hand, and the tortures of the last two years have been great lessons in many ways. Disease and misfortune come to do us good in the long run, although at the time we feel that we are submerged for ever.

I am the infinite blue sky; the clouds may gather over me, but I am the same infinite blue.

I am trying to get a taste of that peace which I know is my nature and everyone's nature. These tin-pots of bodies and foolish dreams of happiness and misery—what are they?

My dreams are breaking. Om Tat Sat!

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

201

1719 TURK STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO,
28th March, 1900.

WELL BLESSED MARY,

This is to let you know "I am very happy". Not that I am getting into a shadowy optimism, but my power of suffering is increasing. I am being lifted up above the pestilential miasma of this world's joys and sorrows; they are losing their meaning. It is a land of dreams; it does not matter whether one enjoys or weeps; they are but dreams, and, as such, must break sooner or later. How are things going on with you folks there? Herriet is going to have a good time at Paris. I am sure to meet her over there and *parler francaise*! I am getting by heart a French *dictionnaire*! I am making some money too, hard work morning and evening; yet better for all that. Good sleep, good digestion, perfect irregularity.

You are going to the East. I hope to come to Chicago before the end of April. If I can't, I will surely meet you in the East before you go.

What are the McKindley girls doing? Eating grape-fruit concoctions and getting plump? Go on, life is but a dream. Are you not glad it is so? My! They want an eternal heaven! Thank God nothing is eternal except Himself. He alone can bear it, I am sure. Eternity of nonsense?

Things are beginning to hum for me; they will presently roar. I shall remain quiet, though, all the same. Things are not humming for you just now. I am so sorry, that is, I am trying to be, for I cannot be sorry for anything any more. I am attaining peace that passeth understanding, which is neither joy nor sorrow, but something above them both. Tell Mother that. My passing through the valley of death—physical, mental—last two years, has helped me in this. Now I am nearing that *Peace,* the eternal silence. Now I mean to see things as they are, everything in that peace, perfect in its way. "He whose joy is only in himself, whose desires are only in himself, he has *learnt* his lessons." This is the great lesson that we are here to learn through myriads of births and heavens and hells—that there is nothing to be asked for, desired for, beyond one's self. "The greatest thing I can obtain, is myself" "I am free", therefore I require none else for my happiness. "Alone through eternity, because I was free, am free, and will remain free for ever." This is Vedantism. 'I preached the theory so long, but oh, joy! Mary, my dear sister, I am realizing it now every day. Yes, I am. "I am free." "Alone, alone, I am the one without a second."

Ever yours in the Sat-Chit-Ananda,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Now I am going to be truly Vivekananda. Did you ever enjoy evil! Ha! ha! you silly girl, all is good! Nonsense. Some good, some evil. I enjoy the good, and I enjoy the evil. I was Jesus, and I was Judas Iscariot; both my play, my fun. "So long as there are two, fear shall not leave thee." Ostrich method? Hide your heads in the sand and think there is nobody seeing you! All is good! Be brave and face everything, come good, come evil, both welcome, both of you my play. I have no good to attain, no ideal to clench up to, no ambition to fulfil; I, the diamond mine, am playing with pebbles, good and evil; good for you, evil, come; good for you, good, you come too. If the universe tumbles round my ears, what is that to me? I am Peace that passeth understanding; understanding only gives us good or evil. I am beyond, I am peace.

V.

202

1719 TURK STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO,
28th March, 1900.

MY DEAR MARGOT,

I am so glad at your good fortune. Things have got to come round if we are steady. I am sure you will get all the money you require here or in England.

I am working hard—and the harder I work the better I feel. This ill health has done me a great good, sure. I am really understanding what non-attachment means. And I hope very soon to be perfectly non-attached.

We put all our energies to concentrate and get attached to one thing; but the other part—equally difficult, though negative—we seldom pay any attention to—the faculty of detaching ourselves at a moment's notice from anything. Both attachment and detachment perfectly developed make a man great and happy.

I am so glad at Mrs. Leggett's gift of $1,000. She is working up, wait. She has a great part to play in Ramakrishna's work, whether she knows it or not.

I enjoyed your accounts of Prof. Geddes, and Joe has a funny account of a clairvoyant. Things are just now beginning to hum.

This letter, I think, will reach you at Chicago. . . .

I had a nice letter from Max Gysic, the young Swiss who is a great friend of Miss Souter. Miss Souter also sends her love, and they ask to know the time when I come over to England. Many people are inquiring, they say.

Things have got to come round—the seed must die underground to come up as the tree. The last two years were the underground rotting. I never had a struggle in the jaws of death, but it meant a tremendous upheaval of the whole life. One such brought me to Ramakrishna, another sent me to the U.S., this has been the greatest of all. It is gone—I am so calm that it astonishes me sometimes!! I work every day morning and evening, eat anything any hour—and go to bed at 12 p.m. in the night—but such fine sleep!! I never had such power of sleeping before!

Yours with all love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

208

1719 Turk Street,
San Francisco,
10th April, 1900.

Dear Joe,

There is a squabble in New York, I see. I got a letter from A——stating that he was going to leave New York. He thought Mrs. Bull and you have written lots against him to me. I wrote him back to be patient and wait, and that Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod wrote only good things about him.

Well, Joe-Joe, you know my method in all these rows; to leave all rows alone! "Mother" sees to all such things. I have finished my work. I am retired, Joe. "Mother" will work now Herself. That is all.

Now, as you say, I am going to send all the money I have made here. I could do it today but I am waiting to make it a thousand. I expect to make a thousand in Frisco by the end of this week. I will buy a draft on New York and send it or ask the bank the best way to do it.

I have plenty of letters from the Math and the Himalayan centre. This morning came one from Swarupananda. Yesterday one from Mrs. Sevier.

I told Mrs. Hansborough about the photos. You tell Mr. Leggett from me to do what is best about the Vedanta Society matter.

The only thing I see is that in every country we have to follow its own method. As such, if I were you, I would convene a meeting of all the members and sympathisers and ask them what they want to do. Whether they want to organize or not, what sort of organization they want if any, etc. But Lordy, do it on your own hook. I am quits. Only if you think my presence would be of any help I can come in fifteen days. I have finished my work here; only, out of San Francisco, Stockton is a little city I want to work a few days in; then I go East. I think I should rest now, although I can have $100 a week average in this city, all along. This time I want to let upon New York the charge of the Light Brigade.

With all love,

Ever yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. If the workers are all averse to organizing, do you think there is any benefit in it? You know best. Do what you think best. I have a letter from Margot from Chicago. She asks some question; I am going to reply.

V.

204

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA,[1]
12th April, 1900.

Mother is becoming propitious once more. Things are looking up. They must.

Work always brings evil with it. I have paid for the accumulated evil with bad health. I am glad. My mind is all the better for it. There is a mellowness and a calmness in life now, which was never there before. I am learning now how to be attached as well as detached, and mentally becoming my own master. . . .

Mother is doing Her own work; I do not worry much now. Moths like me die by the thousand every instant. Her work goes on all the same. Glory unto Mother! . . . Alone and drifting about in the will-current of the Mother, has been my whole life. The moment I have tried to break this, that moment I have been hurt. Her will be done! . . .

I am happy, at peace with myself, and more of the Sannyasin than I ever was before. The love for my own kith and kin is growing less every day, and that for Mother increasing. Memories of long nights of vigil with Shri Ramakrishna under the Dakshineswar Banyan are waking up once more. And work? What is Work? Whose work? Whom shall I work for?

I am free. I am Mother's child. She works, She plays. Why should I plan? What should I plan? Things came and went, just as She liked, without my planning. We are Her automata. She is the wirepuller.

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[1] Written to an American friend.

205

Alameda, California,
18th April, 1900.

My dear Joe,

Just now I received yours and Mrs. Bull's welcome letter. I direct this to London. I am so glad Mrs. Leggett is on the sure way to recovery.

I am so sorry Mr. Leggett resigned the presidentship.[1]

Well, I keep quiet for fear of making further trouble.

You know my methods are extremely harsh, and once roused I may rattle A—too much for his peace of mind.

I wrote to him only to tell him that his notions about Mrs. Bull are entirely wrong.

Work is always difficult; pray for me Joe that my works stop for ever, and my whole soul be absorbed in Mother. Her works, She knows.

You must be glad to be in London once more—the old friends, give them all my love and gratitude.

I am well, very well mentally. I feel the rest of the soul more than that of the body. The battles are lost and won. I have bundled my things and am waiting for the great deliverer.

"Shiva, O Shiva, carry my boat to the other shore."

After all, Joe, I am only the boy who used to listen with rapt wonderment to the wonderful words of Ramakrishna under the Banyan at Dakshineswar. That is my true nature, work and activities, doing good and so forth are all superimpositions. Now I again hear his voice; the same old voice thrilling my soul. Bonds are breaking—love dying, work becoming tasteless—the glamour is off life. Now only the voice of the Master calling. —"I come Lord, I come,"—"Let the dead bury the dead, follow thou Me." "I come, my beloved Lord, I come."

Yes, I come. Nirvâna is before me. I feel it at times—the same infinite ocean of peace, without a ripple, a breath.

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[1] Presidentship of the Vedanta Society of New York, as a result of difference with A—, then in charge of the Society.

I am glad I was born, glad I suffered so, glad I did make big blunders, glad to enter peace. I leave none bound, I take no bonds. Whether this body will fall and release me or I enter into freedom in the body, the old man is gone, gone for ever, never to come! The guide, the Guru, the leader, the teacher, has passed away; the boy, the student, the servant, is left behind.

You understand why I do not want to meddle with A—. Who am I to meddle with anyone, Joe? I have long given up my place as a leader—I have no right to raise my voice. Since the beginning of this year I have not dictated anything in India. You know that. Many thanks for what you and Mrs. Bull have been to me in the past. All blessings follow you ever! The sweetest moments of my life have been when I was drifting; I am drifting again—with the bright warm sun ahead and masses of vegetation around—and in the heat everything is so still, so calm—and I am drifting languidly—in the warm heart of the river! I dare not make a splash with my hands or feet—for fear of breaking the marvellous stillness, stillness that makes you feel sure it is an illusion!

Behind my work was ambition, behind my love was personality, behind my purity was fear, behind my guidance the thirst of power! Now they are vanishing and I drift. I come! Mother, I come! In Thy warm bosom, floating wheresoever Thou takest me, in the voiceless, in the strange, in the wonderland, I come—a spectator, no more an actor.

Oh, it is so calm! My thoughts seem to come from a great, great distance in the interior of my own heart. They seem like faint, distant whispers, and peace is upon everything, sweet, sweet peace—like that one feels a few moments just before falling into sleep, when things are seen and felt like shadows—without fear, without love, without emotion. Peace that one feels alone, surrounded with statues and pictures—I come! Lord, I come!

The world *is*, but not beautiful nor ugly, but as sensations without exciting any emotion. Oh, Joe, the blessedness of it! Everything is good and beautiful; for things are all losing their relative proportions to me—my body among the first. Om That Existence!

I hope great things to come to you all in London and Paris. Fresh joy—fresh benefits to mind and body.

With love as ever to you and Mrs. Bull,

Yours faithfully,
VIVEKANANDA.

206

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA,
20th April, 1900.

MY DEAR JOE,

Received your note today. I wrote you one yesterday but directed it to England thinking you will be there.

I have given your message to Mrs. Betts. I am so sorry this little quarrel came with A——. I got also his letter you sent. He is correct so far as he says, "Swami wrote me, 'Mr. Leggett is not interested in Vedanta and will not help any more. You stand on your own feet'." It was as you and Mrs. Leggett desired me to write him from Los Angeles about New York—in reply to his asking me what to do for funds.

Well, things will take their own shape, but it seems in Mrs. Bull's and your mind there is some idea that I ought to do something. But in the first place, I do not know anything about the difficulties. None of you write me anything about what that is for, and I am no thought-reader.

You simply wrote me a general idea that A——wanted to keep things in his hands. What can I understand from it? What are the difficulties? Regarding what the differences are about, I am as much in the dark as about the exact date of the Day of Destruction!

And yet Mrs. Bull's and your letters show quite an amount of vexation!

These things get complicated sometimes, in spite of ourselves. Let them take their shape.

I have executed and sent the will to Mr. Leggett as desired by Mrs. Bull.

I am going on, sometimes well and at other times ill. I cannot say, on my conscience, that I have been the least benefited by Mrs. Milton. She has been good to me, I am very thankful. My love to her. Hope she will benefit others.

For writing to Mrs. Bull this fact, I got a four page sermon, as to how I ought to be grateful and thankful, etc., etc.

All that is, sure, the outcome of this A——business! Sturdy and Mrs. Johnson got disturbed by Margot, and they fell upon me. Now A——disturbs Mrs. Bull and, of course, I have to bear the brunt of it. Such is life!

You and Mrs. Leggett wanted me to write him to be free and independent and that Mr. Leggett was not going to help them. I wrote it—now what can I do?

If John or Jack does not obey you, am I to be hanged for it? What do I know about this Vedanta Society? Did I start it? Had I any hand in it?

Then again, nobody condescends to write me anything about what the affair is!

Well, this world is a great fun.

I am glad Mrs. Leggett is recovering fast. I pray every moment for her complete recovery. I start for Chicago on Monday. A kind lady has given me a pass to New York to be used within three months. The Mother will take care of me. She is not going to strand me now after guarding me all my life.

Ever yours gratefully,
VIVEKANANDA.

207

SAN FRANCISCO,
26th May, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

All blessings on you. Don't despond in the least. *Shri wah Guru! Shri wah Guru!* You come of the blood of a Kshatriya. Our yellow garb is the robe of death on the field of battle. Death for the cause is our goal, not success. *Shri wah Guru!* . . .

Black and thick are the folds of sinister fate. But I am the master. I raise my hand, and lo, they vanish! All this is nonsense and fear. I am the Fear of fear, the Terror of terror. I am the fearless secondless One, I am the Ruler of destiny, the Wiper-out of fact. *Shri wah Guru*! Steady, child, don't be bought by gold or anything else, and we win!

VIVEKANANDA.

208

1921 WEST 21 STREET,
LOS ANGELES,
17th June, 1900.

MY DEAR MARY,

It is true I am much better, but not yet completely recovered; anyway, the complexion of the mind is one belonging to everyone that suffers. It is neither gas nor anything else.

Kâli worship is not a necessary step in any religion. The Upanishads teach us all there is of religion. Kali worship is my special *fad*, you never heard me preach it, or read of my preaching it in India. I only preach what is good for universal humanity. If there is any curious method which applies entirely to me, I keep it a secret and there it ends. I must not explain to you what Kali worship is, as I never taught it to anybody.

You are entirely mistaken if you think the Boses[1] are rejected by the Hindu people. The English rulers want to push him into a corner. They don't of course like that sort of development in the Indian race. They make it hot for him, that is why he seeks to go elsewhere.

By the "anglicised" are meant people who by their manners and conduct show that they are ashamed of us poor, old type Hindus. I am not ashamed of my race or my birth or nationality. That such people are not liked by the Hindus, I cannot wonder.

Ceremonials and symbols etc. have no place in our religion which is the doctrine of the Upanishads, pure and simple.

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[1] Sir (then Mr.) and lady J. C. Bose.

Many people think the ceremonial etc. help them in realizing religion. I have no objection.

Religion is that which does not depend upon books or teachers or prophets or saviours, and that which does not make us dependent in this or in any other lives upon others. In this sense Advaitism of the Upanishads is the only religion. But saviours, books, prophets, ceremonials, etc., have their places. They may help many, as Kali worship helps me in my *secular work*. They are welcome.

The Guru, however, is a different idea. It is the relation between the transmitter and the receiver of force—psychic power and knowledge. Each nation is a type, physically and mentally. Each is constantly receiving ideas from others only to work it out *into* its type, that is, along the national line. The time has not come for the destruction of types. All education from any source is compatible with the ideals in every country; only they must be nationalised, i.e. fall in line with the rest of the type manifestation.

Renunciation is always the ideal of every race; only other races do not know what they are made to do by nature unconsciously. Through the ages one purpose runs sure. And that will be finished with the destruction of this earth and the sun! And worlds are always in progress indeed! And nobody as yet developed enough in any one of the infinite worlds to communicate with us! Bosh! They are born, show the same phenomena and die the same death! Increasing purpose! Babies! Live in the land of dreams, you babies!

Well, now about me. You must persuade Harriet to give me a few dollars every month, and I will have some other friends do the same. If I succeed, I fly off to India. I am dead tired of the platform work for a living. It does not please me any more. I retire and do some writing if I can do some scholarly work.

I am coming soon to Chicago, hope to be there in a few days. Say, would not Mrs. Adams be able to get up a class for me to pay my passage back?

Of course I shall try different places. So much of optimism has come to me, Mary, that I should fly off to the Himalayas if I had wings.

I have worked for this world, Mary, all my life and it does not give me a piece of bread without taking a pound of flesh. If I can get a piece of bread a day, I retire entirely, but this is impossible—this is the increasing purpose that is unfolding all the devilish inwardness, as I am getting older!

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. If ever a man found the vanity of things, I have it now. This is the world, hideous, beastly corpse. Who thinks of helping it is a fool! But we have to work out our slavery by doing good or evil; I have worked it out, I hope. May the Lord take me to the other shore! Amen! I have given up all thoughts about India or any land. I am now selfish, want to save myself!

"He who revealed unto Brahma (the first of the gods) the Vedas, who is manifest in every heart, unto Him I take refuge, hoping deliverance from bondage."

V

209

VEDANTA SOCIETY,
146 E, 55TH STREET,
NEW YORK.
23rd June, 1900.

MY DEAR MARY,

Many, many thanks for your beautiful letter. I am very well and happy and same as ever. Waves must come before a rise. So with me. I am very glad you are going to pray. Why don't you get up a Methodist camp-meeting? That will have quicker effect, I am sure.

I am determined to get rid of all sentimentalism and emotionalism, and hang me if you ever find me emotional. I am the Advaitist; our goal is *knowledge*—no feelings, no love, as all that belongs to matter and superstition and bondage. I am only existence and knowledge.

Greenacre will give you good rest, I am sure. I wish you all joy there. Don't for a moment worry on my account. "Mother" looks after me. She is bringing me fast out of the hell of emotionalism, and bringing me into the light of pure reason.

With everlasting wishes for your happiness,

Ever your brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Margot starts on the 26th. I may follow in a week or two. Nobody has any power over me, for I am the spirit. I have no ambition; it is all Mother's work; I have no part.

I could not digest your letter as the dyspepsia was rather bad last few days.

Non-attachment has always been there. It has come in a minute. Very soon I stand where no sentiment, no feeling can touch me.

V.

210

102 EAST 58TH STREET,
NEW YORK,
24th July, 1900.

DEAR JOE,

The sun = Knowledge. The stormy water = Work. The lotus = Love. The serpent = Yoga. The swan = the Self. The Motto = May the Swan (the Supreme Self) send us that. It is the mind-lake.[1] How do you like it? May the Swan fill you with all these anyway.

I am to start on Thursday next, by the French steamer *La Champagne*. The books are in the hands of Waldo and Whitmarsh. They are nearly ready.

I am well, getting better—and all right till I see you next week.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] This explains the design on the Ramakrishna Math and Mission seal, printed on the title page of this book.

211*

NEW YORK,
August, 1900.

DEAR——,[1]

I had a letter from you several days ago, but I could not reply earlier. Mr. Sevier speaks well of you in his letter. I am very pleased at this.

Write to me in minute detail who all are there, and what each one is doing. Why don't you write letters to your mother? What is this? Devotion to the mother is the root of all welfare. How is your brother getting on with his studies at Calcutta? The Sannyasin-names[2] of those there escape my memory—how to address each? Give my love to all conjointly. I got the news that Khagen has now fully recovered. This is happy news. Write to me whether the Seviers are attending to your comforts and other details. I am glad to know that Dinu's health is all right. The boy Kali has a tendency to become fat; but this will all surely go away by constantly climbing up and down the hills there. Tell Swarup that I am very much pleased with his conducting of the paper. He is doing splendid work. Give to all others also my love and blessings. Tell everybody that my health is now all right. From here I shall go to England and from there to India very shortly.

With all blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

212*

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS,
PARIS.

DEAR BROTHER HARI,

Now I am staying on the seacoast of France. The session of the Congress of History of Religions is over. It was not a big affair; some twenty scholars chattered a lot on the origin of the Shâlagrâma and the origin of Jehovah, and similar topics. I also said something on the occasion.

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[1] A Brahmacharin of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati.

[2] Khagen—Swami Vimalananda; Dinu—Swami Sachchidananda, Kali—Swami Virajananda; Swarup—Swami Swarupananda, first President of Advaita Ashrama, and Editor of the Prabuddha Bharata.

My body and mind are broken down; I need rest badly. In addition, there is not a single person on whom I can depend, on the other hand so long as I live, all will become very selfish depending upon me for everything.

. . . Dealing with people entails constant mental uneasiness. . . . I have cut myself off by a will. Now I am writing to say that nobody will have sole power. All will be done in accordance with the view of the majority. . . . If a trust-deed on similar lines can be executed, then I am free. . . .

What you are doing is also Guru Maharaj's work. Continue to do it. Now I have done my part. Don't write to me any more about those things; do not even mention the subject. I have no opinions whatever to give on that subject. . . .

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Convey my love to all.

213

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS,
PARIS,
25th August, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

Your letter reached me just now. Many thanks for the kind expressions.

I gave a chance to Mrs. Bull to draw her money out of the Math; and as she did not say anything about it, and the trust-deeds were waiting here to be executed, I got them executed duly at the British consulate; and they are on their way to India now.

Now I am free, as I have kept no power or authority or position for me in the work. I also have resigned the Presidentship of the Ramakrishna Mission.

The Math etc. belong now to the immediate disciples of Ramakrishna except myself. The Presidentship is now Brahmananda's—next it will fall on Premananda etc., etc., in turn.

I am so glad a whole load is off me, now I am happy. I have served Ramakrishna through mistakes and success for 20 years now. I retire for good and devote the rest of my life to myself.

I no longer represent anybody, nor am I responsible to anybody. As to my friends, I had a morbid sense of obligation. I have thought well and find I owe nothing to anybody—if anything, I have given my best energies, unto death almost, and received only hectoring and mischief-making and botheration. I am done with everyone here and in India.

Your letter indicates that I am jealous of your new friends. You must know once for all I am born without jealousy, without avarice, without the desire to rule—whatever other vices I am born with.

I never directed you before; now after I am nobody in the work, I have no direction whatever. I only know this much: So long as you serve "Mother" with a whole heart, She will be your guide.

I never had any jealousy about what friends you made. I never criticised my brethren for mixing up in anything. Only I do believe the Western people have the peculiarity of trying to force upon others whatever seems good to them, forgetting that what is good for you may not be good for others. As such, I am afraid you might try to force upon others whatever turn your mind might take in contact with new friends. That was the only reason I sometimes tried to stop any particular influence and nothing else.

You are free, have your own choice, your own work. . . .

Friends or foes, they are all instruments in Her hands to help us work out our own Karma, through pleasure or pai
As such "Mother" bless them all.

With all love and blessings.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

214

PARIS,
28th August, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

Such is life—grind, grind; and yet what else are we to do? Grind, grind! Something will come—some way will be opened. If it does not, as it probably never will—then, then—what then? All our efforts are only to stave off, for a season, the great climax—death! Oh, what would the world do without you, Death! Thou great healer!

The world, as it is, is not real, is not eternal, thank the Lord!! How can the future be any better? That must be an effect of this one—at least like this, if not worse!

Dreams, oh dreams! Dream on! Dream, the magic of dream, is the cause of this life, it is also the remedy. Dream, dream, only dream! Kill dream by dream!

I am trying to learn French, talking to—here. Some are very appreciative already. Talk to all the world—of the eternal riddle, the eternal spool of fate—whose thread-end no one finds and everyone seems to find, at least to his own satisfaction, at least for a time—to fool himself a moment, is it?

Well, now great things are to be done—who cares for great things? Why not do small things as well? One is as good as the other. The greatness of little things, that is what the Gita teaches, bless the old book!! . . .

I have not had much time to think of the body. So it must be well. Nothing is ever well here. We forget them at times and that is being well and doing well. . . .

We play our parts here—good or bad. When the dream is finished and we have left the stage, we will have a hearty laugh at all this—of this only I am sure.

Yours etc.
VIVEKANANDA.

215*

6 Place Des Etats Unis,
Da Forest P. O.,
Santa Clara Co.,
Paris, France,
1st September, 1900.

My dear Hari,

I learnt everything from your letter. Earlier I had an inkling of some trouble between the full-fledged Vedantist and the Home of Truth—someone wrote that. Such things do occur; wisdom consists in carrying on the work by cleverly keeping all in good humour.

For some time now I have been living *incognito*. I shall stay with the French to pick up their language. I am somewhat freed from worries; that is to say, I have signed the trust-deed and other things and sent them to Calcutta. I have not reserved any right or ownership for myself. You now possess everything and will manage all work by the Master's grace.

I have no longer any desire to kill myself by touring. For the present I feel like settling down somewhere and spending my time among books. I have somewhat mastered the French language; but if I stay among the French for a month or two, I shall be able to carry on conversation well. If one can master this language and German sufficiently, one can virtually become well acquainted with European learning. The people of France are mere intellectualists, they run after worldly things and firmly believe God and souls to be superstitions; they are extremely loath to talk on such subjects. This is a truly materialistic country! Let me see what the Lord does. But this country is at the head of Western culture, and Paris is the capital of that culture.

Brother, free me from all work connected with preaching. I am now aloof from all that, you manage it yourselves. It is my firm conviction that Mother will get work done through all of you a hundredfold more than through me.

Many days ago I received a letter from Kali. He must have reached New York by now. Miss Waldo sends news now and then.

I keep sometimes well and sometimes bad. Of late I am again having that massage treatment by Mrs. Milton, who says, "You have already recovered!" This much I see—whatever the flatulence, I feel no difficulty in moving, walking, or even climbing. In the morning I take vigorous exercise, and then have a dip in cold water.

Yesterday I went to see the house of the gentleman[1] with whom I shall stay. He is a poor scholar, has his room filled with books, and lives in a flat on the fifth floor. And as there are no lifts in this country as in America, one has to climb up and down. But it is no longer trying to me.

There is a beautiful public park round the house. The gentleman cannot speak English; that is a further reason for my going. I shall have to speak French perforce. It is all Mother's will. She knows best what She wants to have done. She never speaks out, "only keeps mum". But this much I notice that for a month or so I have been having intense meditation and repetition of the Lord's name.

Please convey my love to Miss Boocke, Miss Bell, Mrs. Aspinol, Miss Beckham, Mr. George, Dr. Logan, and other friends, and accept it yourself. My love to all in Los Angeles also.

Yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

216

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS,
PARIS,
3rd September, 1900.

DEAR MOTHER,[2]

We had a congress of cranks here in this house.

The representatives came from various countries, from India in the south, to Scotland in the north, with England and America buttressing the sides.

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[1] M. Jules Bois.

[2] Mrs. Francis Leggett.

We were having great difficulty in electing the president, for though Dr. James (Professor William James) was there, he was more mindful of the blisters raised on him by Mrs. Milton (probably by magnetic healing) than solution of world problems.

I proposed Joe, but she refused on the ground of non-arrival of her new gown—and went to a corner to watch the scene, from a coign of vantage.

Mrs. Bull was ready, but Margot objected to this meeting being reduced to a comparative philosophy class.

When we were thus in a fix—up sprung a short, square, almost round figure from the corner, and without any ceremoney declared that all difficulties will be solved, not only of electing a president but of life itself, if we all took to worshipping the Sun God and Moon God. He delivered his speech in five minutes; but it took his disciple, who was present, fully three quarters of an hour to translate. In the meanwhile, the master began to draw the rugs in your parlour up in a heap, with the intention, as he said, of giving us an ocular demonstration of the power of "Fire God", then and there.

At this juncture Joe interposed and insisted that she did not want a fire sacrifice in her parlour, whereupon the Indian saint looked daggers at Joe, entirely disgusted at the behaviour of one he confidently believed to be a perfect convert to fire worship.

Then Dr. James snatched a minute from nursing his blisters and declared that he would have something very interesting to speak upon Fire God and his brethren, if he were not entirely occupied with the evolution of Miltonian blisters. Moreover his great Master, Herbert Spencer, not having investigated the subject before him, he would stick to golden silence.

"Chutney is the thing", said a voice near the door. We all looked back and saw Margot. "It is Chutney", she said, "Chutney and Kâli, that will remove all difficulties of life, and make it easy for us to swallow all evils, and relish what is good". But she stopped all of a sudden and vehemently asserted that she was not going to speak any further, as she has been obstructed by a certain male animal in the audience in her speech. She was sure one man in the audience had his head turned towards the window and was not paying the attention proper to a lady, and though as to herself she believed in the equality of the sexes, yet she wanted to know the reason of that disgusting man's want of due respect for women. Then one and all declared that they had been giving her the most undivided attention, and all above the equal right, her due, but to no purpose. Margot would have nothing to do with that horrible crowd and sat down.

Then Mrs. Bull of Boston took the floor and began to explain how all the difficulties of the world were from not understanding the true relation between the sexes. She said, "The only panacea was a right understanding of the proper persons, and then to find liberty in love and freedom in liberty and motherhood, brotherhood, fatherhood, Godhood, love in freedom and freedom in love, in the right holding up of the true ideal in sex."

To this the Scotch delegate vehemently objected and said that as the hunter chased the goatherd, the goatherd the shepherd, the shepherd the peasant, and the peasant drove the fisher into the sea, now we wanted to fish out of the deep the fisher and let him fall upon the peasant, the peasant upon the shepherd, and so on; and the web of life will be completed, and we will be all happy—he was not allowed to continue his driving business long. In a second everyone was on his feet and we could only hear a confusion of voices—"Sun God and Moon God", "Chutney and Kâli", "Freedom holding up right understanding, sex, motherhood", "Never, the fisherman must go back to the shore", etc. Whereupon Joe declared that she was yearning to be the hunter for the time and chase them all out of the house if they did not stop their nonsense.

Then was peace and calm restored, and I hasten to write you about it.

Yours affly.,
VIVEKANANDA.

217

PERROUS GUIREC,
BRETAGNE,
22nd September, 1900.

The mother's heart, the hero's will,
The softest flower's sweetest feel;
The charm and force that ever sway
The altar fire's flaming play;
The strength that leads, in love obeys;
Far-reaching dreams, and patient ways,
Eternal faith in Self, in all
The sight Divine in great in small;
All these, and more than I could see
Today may "Mother" grant to thee.

Ever yours with love and blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

DEAR ALBERTA,[1]

This little poem is for your birthday. It is not good, but it has all my love. I am sure, therefore, you will like it.

Will you kindly send a copy each of the pamphlets there to Madame Besnard, Clairoix, Bres Compiegne, Oise, and oblige?

Your well-wisher,
VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] Miss Alberta Sturges. Written on her 23rd birthday.

218

6 Place Des Etats Unis,
Paris,
14th October, 1900.

God bless you at each step, my dear Christine, such is my constant prayer!

Your letter, so beautiful and so calm, has given me that fresh energy which I am often losing.

I am happy, yes, I am happy, but the cloud has not left me entirely. It sometimes comes back, unfortunately, but it no longer has the morbidity it used to have.

I am staying with a famous French writer, M. Jules Bois. I am his guest. As he is a man making his living with his pen, he is not rich, but we have many great ideas in common and feel happy together.

He discovered me a few years ago and has already translated some of my pamphlets into French. We shall in the end find what we are looking for, isn't it?

Thus, I shall travel with Madame Calvé, Miss MacLeod, and M. Jules Bois. I shall be the guest of Madame Calvé, the famous singer. We shall go to Constantinople, the Near East, Greece, and Egypt. On our way back, we shall visit Venice.

It may be that I shall give a few lectures in Paris after my return, but they will be in English with an interpreter.

I have no time any more, nor the power to study a new language at my age. I am an old man, isn't it?

Mrs. Funke is ill. I think she works too hard. She already had some nervous trouble. I hope she will soon be well.

I am sending all the money I earned in America to India. Now I am free, the begging-monk as before. I have also resigned from the presidentship of the Monastery. Thank God, I am free! It is no more for me to carry such a responsibility. I am so nervous and so weak. "As the birds which have slept in the branches of a tree wake up, singing when the dawn comes, and soar up into the deep blue sky, so is the end of my life."

I have had many difficulties, and also some very great successes. But all my difficulties and suffering count for nothing, as I have succeeded. I have attained my aim. I have found the pearl for which I dived into the ocean of life. I have been rewarded. I am pleased.

Thus it seems to me that a new chapter of my life is opening. It seems to me that Mother will now lead me slowly and softly. No more effort on roads full of obstacles, now it is the bed prepared with birds' down. Do you understand that? Believe me, I feel quite sure.

The experience of all my life, up to now, has taught me, thank God, that I always find what I am looking for with eagerness. Sometimes it is after much suffering, but it does not matter! All is forgotten in the softness of the reward. You are also going through troubles, my friend, but you shall have your reward. Alas! What you now find is not a reward but an additional affliction.

As to myself, I see the cloud lifting, vanishing, the cloud of my bad Karma. And the sun of my good Karma rises—shining, beautiful, and powerful. This will also be the case for you, my friend. My knowledge of this language has not the power to express my emotion. But which language can really do so?[1]

So I drop it, leaving it to your heart to clothe my thought with a soft, loving and shining language. Good night, *gute Nacht*!

Your devoted friend,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. We shall leave Paris for Vienna on October 29th. Mr. Leggett is leaving for the United States by next week. We shall notify the Post Office to forward our letters to our further destinations.

V.

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[1] The letter, thus far, has been translated from French.

219

THE MATH., BELUR,
HOWRAH DIST., BENGAL, INDIA,
15th December, 1900.

MY DEAR MOTHER,[1]

Three days ago I reached here. It was quite unexpected—my visit, and everybody was so surprised.

Things here have gone better than I expected during my absence, only Mr. Sevier has passed away. It was a tremendous blow, sure, and I don't know the future of the work in the Himalayas. I am expecting daily a letter from Mrs. Sevier who is there still.

How are you? Where are you? My affairs here will be straightened out shortly, I hope, and I am trying my best to straighten them out.

The remittance you send my cousin should henceforth be sent to me direct, the bills being drawn in my name. I will cash them and send her the money. It is better the money goes to her through me.

Saradananda and Brahmananda are much better, and this year there is very little malaria here. This narrow strip on the banks of the river is always free from malaria. Only when we get a large supply of pure water the conditions will be perfected here.

VIVEKANANDA.

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[1] Mrs. Ole Bull.

220*

C/o Babu Priyanath Mukherji;
Deoghar, Vaidyanath,
23rd December,. 1900.

Dear Mother,[1]

I am very glad to receive your letter. What you have understood is right. स ईशोऽनिर्वचनीयप्रेमस्वरूपः —"The Lord is identical with unspeakable love." That this characteristic of God mentioned by Narada is manifest and admitted on all hands is the firm conviction of my life. The aggregate of many individuals is called Samasthi (the whole), and each individual is called Vyashti (a part). You, and I—each is Vyasthi, society is Samashti. You, I, an animal, a bird, a worm, an insect, a tree, a creeper, the earth, a planet, a star—each is Vyasthi, while this universe is Samasthi, which is called Virât, Hiranyagarbha, or Ishvara in Vedanta, and Brahmâ, Vishnu, Devi, etc., in the Puranas. Whether or not Vyasthi has individual freedom, and if it has, what should be its measure, whether or not Vyashti should completely sacrifice its own will, its own happiness for Samashti—are the perennial problems before every society. Society everywhere is busy finding the solution of these problems. These, like big waves, are agitating modern Western society. The doctrine which demands the sacrifice of individual freedom to social supremacy is called socialism, while that which advocates the cause of the individual is called individualism.

Our motherland is a glowing example of the results and consequences of the eternal subjection of the individual to society and forced self-sacrifice by dint of institution and discipline. In this country men are born according to Shâstric injunctions, they eat and drink by prescribed rules throughout life, they go through marriage and kindred functions in the same way; in short, they even die according to Shastric injunctions. This hard discipline, with the exception of one great good point, is frought with evil. The good point is that men can do one or two things well, with very iittle effort, having practised them every day through generations. The delicious rice and curry which a cook of this country prepares with the aid of three lumps of earth and a few sticks can be had nowhere else. With the simple mechanism of an antediluvian loom, worth one rupee, and the feet put in a pit, it is possible to make kincobs worth twenty rupees a yard, in this country alone. A torn mat, an earthen lamp, and that fed by castor oil—with the aid of materials such as these, wonderful *savants* are produced in this country alone. An all-forbearing attachment to an ugly and deformed wife, and a life-long devotion to a worthless and villainous husband are possible in this country alone. Thus far the bright side.

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[1] Shrimati Mrinalini Basu.

But all these things are done by people guided like lifeless machines—there is no mental activity, no unfoldment of the heart, no vibration of life, no flux of hope, there is no strong stimulation of the will, no experience of keen pleasure, nor the contact of intense sorrow; there is no stir of inventive genius, no desire for novelty, no appreciation of new things. Clouds never pass away from this mind. the radiant picture of the morning sun never charms this heart. It never even occurs to the mind if there is any better state than this; where it does, it cannot convince; in the event of conviction, effort is lacking; and even where there is effort, lack of enthusiasm kills it out.

If living by rule alone ensures excellence, if it be virtue strictly to follow the rules and customs handed down through generations, say, then, who is more virtuous than a tree, who is a greater devotee, a holier saint than a railway train? Who has ever seen a piece of stone transgress a natural law? Who has ever known cattle to commit sin?

The huge steamer, the mighty railway engine—they are non-intelligent, they move, turn, and run; but they are without intelligence. And yonder tiny worm which moved away from the railway line to save its life, why is it intelligent? There is no manifestation of will in the machine, the machine never wishes to transgress law; the worm wants to oppose law, rises against law whether it succeeds or not, therefore it is intelligent. Greater is the happiness, higher is the Jiva, in proportion as this will is more successfully manifest. The will of God is perfectly fruitful, therefore He is the highest.

What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education. Now consider, is that education as a result of which the will, being continuously choked by force through generations, is well-nigh killed out; is that education under whose sway even the old ideas, let alone the new ones, are disappearing one by one; is that education which is slowly making man a machine? It is more blessed, in my opinion, even to go wrong impelled by one's free will and intelligence than to be good as an automaton. Again, can that be called society which is formed by an aggregate of men who are like lumps of clay, like lifeless machines, like heaped up pebbles? How can such society fare well? Were good possible, then instead of being slaves for hundreds of years, we would have been the greatest nation on earth, and this soil of India, instead of being a mine of stupidity, would have been the eternal fountain head of learning.

Is not self-sacrifice, then, a virtue? Is it not the most virtuous deed to sacrifice the happiness of one, the welfare of one, for the sake of the many? Exactly, but as the Bengali adage goes, "Can beauty be manufactured by rubbing and scrubbing? Can love be generated by effort and compulsion?" What glory is there in the renunciation of an eternal beggar? What virtue is there in the sense-control of one devoid of sense-power? What again is the self-sacrifice of one devoid of idea, devoid of heart, devoid of high ambition, and devoid of the conception of what constitutes society? What expression of devotedness to a husband is there by forcing a widow to commit Sati? Why make people do virtuous deeds by teaching superstitions? I say, liberate, undo the shackles of people as you can. Can dirt be washed by dirt? Can bondage be removed by bondage? Where is the instance? When you would be able to sacrifice all desire for happiness, for the sake of society, then you would be the Buddha, then you would be free; that is far off. Again, do you think the way to it lies through oppression? "Oh, what example of self-denial are our widows? Oh, how sweet is child-marriage! Is another such custom possible? Can there be anything but love between husband

and wife in such a marriage?"—such is the whine going round nowadays. But as to the men, the masters of the situation, there is no need of self-denial for them! Is there a virtue higher than serving others? But the same does not apply to Brahmins—you others do it! The truth is, that in this country parents and relatives can ruthlessly sacrifice the best interests of their children and others, for their own selfish ends, to save themselves by a compromise to society, and the teaching of generations rendering the mind callous, has made it perfectly easy. He, the brave, alone can deny self. The coward, afraid of the lash, with one hand wipes his eyes and gives with the other. What avail such gifts? It is a far cry to love universal. The young plant should be hedged in and taken care of. One can hope to gradually attain to universal love if one can learn to love one object unselfishly. If devotion to one particular Ishtadeva is attained, devotion to the universal Virat is gradually possible.

Therefore, when one has been able to deny self for an individual, one should talk of self-sacrifice for the sake of society, not before. It is action with desire that leads to action without desire. Is the renunciation of desire possible, if desire did not exist in the beginning? And what could it mean? Can light have any meaning if there is no darkness?

Worship with desire, with attachment, comes first. Commence with the worship of the little, then the greater will come of itself.

Mother, be not anxious. It is against the big tree that the great wind strikes. "Poking a fire makes it burn better"; "A snake struck on the head raises its hood"; and so on. When there comes affliction in the heart, when the storm of sorrow blows all around, and it seems light will be seen no more, when hope and courage are almost gone, it is then, in the midst of this great spiritual tempest, that the light of Brahman within gleams. Brought up in the lap of luxury, lying on a bed of roses, and never shedding a tear, who has ever become great, who has ever unfolded the Brahman within? Why do you fear to weep? Weep! Weeping clears the eyes and brings about intuition. Then the vision of diversity—man, animal, tree—slowly melting away, makes room for the infinite realization of Brahman everywhere and in everything. Then,

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥

"Verily, seeing the same God equally existent everywhere, he does not injure the self by the self, and so goes to the Supreme Goal."

Ever your well-wisher,
VIVEKANANDA.

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THE MATH, BELUR, HOWRAH,
26th December, 1900.

DEAR JOE,

This mail brought your letter including that of Mother and Alberta. What the learned friend of Alberta says about Russia is about the same I think myself. Only there is one difficulty of thought—is it possible for the Hindu race to be Russianised?

Dear Mr. Sevier passed away before I could arrive. He was cremated on the banks of the river that flows by his Ashrama *à la* Hindu, covered with garlands, the Brahmins carrying the body and boys chanting the Vedas.

The cause has already two martyrs.[1] It makes me love dear old England and its heroic breed. The Mother is watering the plant of future India with the best blood of England. Glory unto Her!

Dear Mrs. Sevier is calm. A letter she wrote me to Paris comes back this mail. I am going up tomorrow to pay her a visit. Lord bless her, dear brave soul!

I am calm and strong. Occasion never found me low yet; Mother will not make me now depressed.

It is very pleasant here, now the winter is on. The Himalayas will be still more beautiful with the uncovered snows

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[1] Capt. Sevier and Mr. Goodwin.

The young man who started from New York, Mr. Johnston, has taken the vow of a Brahmacharin and is at Mayavati.

Send the money to Saradananda in the Math, as I will be away in the hills. They have worked all right as far as they could; I am glad and feel myself quite a fool on account of my nervous chagrin. They are as good and as faithful as ever, and they are in good health. Write all this to Mrs. Bull, and tell her she was always right and I was wrong, and I beg a hundred thousand pardons of her.

Oceans of love for her and for M—.

I look behind and after
And find that all is right,
In my deepest sorrows
There is a soul of light.

All love to M—, Mrs. C—, to dear Jules Bois, and to you, dear Joe, Pranams.

Vivekananda.

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Prabuddha Bharata Office,
Advaita Ashrama,
Mayavati (via Almora),
Kumaon, Himalayas,
6th January, 1901.

My dear Mother,[1]

I send you forthwith a translation of the *Nâsadiya* Hymn sent by Dr. Bose through you. I have tried to make it as literal as possible.

I hope Dr. Bose has recovered his health perfectly by this time.

Mrs. Sevier is a strong woman, and has borne her loss quietly and bravely. She is coming over to England in April, and I am going over with her. I ought to come to England as early as I can this summer; and as she must go to attend to her husband's affairs, I accompany her.

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[1] Mrs. Ole Bull.

This place is very, very beautiful and they have made it simply exquisite. It is a huge place several acres in area, and is very well kept. I hope Mrs. Sevier will be in a position to keep it up in the future. She wishes it ever so much, of course.

My last letter from Joe informed me that she was going up the . . . . with Mme. Calvé.

I am very glad to learn that Margot is leaving her lore for future use. Her book has been very much appreciated here, but the publishers do not seem to make any effort at sale.

The first day's touch of Calcutta brought the asthma back; and every night I used to get a fit during the two weeks I was there. I am, however, very well in the Himalayas.

It is snowing heavily here, and I was caught in a blizzard on the way; but it is not very cold, and all this exposure to the snows for two days on my way here seems to have done me a world of good.

Today I walked over the snow uphill about a mile, seeing Mrs. Sevier's lands; she has made beautiful roads all over. Plenty of gardens, fields, orchards, and large forests, all in her land. The living houses are so simple, so clean, and so pretty, and above all so suited for the purpose.

Are you going to America soon? If not, I hope to see you in London in three months.

Kindly give my best wishes to Miss Olcock and kindly convey my undying love to Miss Müller the next time you see her; so to Sturdy. I have seen my mother, my cousin, and all my people in Calcutta.

Kindly send the remittance you send my cousin to me—*in my name* so that I shall cash the cheque and give her the money. Saradananda and Brahmananda and the rest were well in the Math when I last left them.

All here send love.

Ever your loving son,
VIVEKANANDA.

P.S. Kâli has taken two sacrifices; the cause has already two European martyrs. Now, it is going to rise up splendidly.

My love to Alberta and Mrs. Vaughan.

The snow is lying all round six inches deep, the sun is bright and glorious, and now in the middle of the day we are sitting outside, reading. And the snow all about us! The winter here is very mild in spite of the snow. The air is dry and balmy, and the water beyond all praise.

V.

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THE MATH, BELUR,
6th July, 1901.

DEAR CHRISTINE,

Things come to me by fits—today I am in a fit of writing. The first thing to do is, therefore, to pen a few lines to you. I am known to be nervous, I worry much; but it seems, dear Christine, you are not far behind in that trick. One of our poets says, "Even the mountains will fly, the fire will be cold, yet the heart of the great will never change". I am small, very, but I know you are great and my faith is always in your true heart. *I worry about everything except you.* I have dedicated you to the *Mother.* She is your shield, your guide. No harm can reach you—nothing hold you down, a minute, I know it.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

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THE MATH, BELUR,
HOWRAH DIST., BENGAL,
27th August, 1901.

MY DEAR MARY,

I would that my health were what you expected—at least to write you a long letter. It is getting worse, in fact, every day, and so many complications and botherations without that. I have ceased to notice it at all.

I wish you all joy in your lovely Swiss chalet—splendid health, good appetite, and a light study of Swiss or other antiquities just to liven things up a bit. I am so glad you are breathing the free air of the mountains, but sorry that Sam is not in the best of health. Well, there is no anxiety about it, he has naturally such a fine physique. . . .

"Women's moods and man's luck—the gods themselves do not know, what to speak of man?" My instincts may be very feminine, but what I am exercised with just this moment is, that you get a little bit of manliness about you. Oh! Mary, your brain, health, beauty, everything is going to waste just for lack of that one essential—assertion of individuality. Your haughtiness, spirit, etc. are all nonsense, only mockery; you are at best a boarding-school girl, no backbone! no backbone!

Alas! this lifelong leading-string business! This is very harsh, very brutal; but I can't help it. I love you, Mary, sincerely, genuinely; I can't cheat you with namby-pamby sugar candies. Nor do they ever come to me.

Then again, I am a dying man; I have no time to fool in. Wake up, girl. I expect now from you letters of the right slashing order; give it right straight; I need a good deal of rousing.

I did not hear anything of the MacVeaghs when they were here. I have not had any direct message from Mrs. Bull or Nivedita, but I hear regularly from Mrs. Sevier, and they are all in Norway as guests of Mrs. Bull. I don't know when Nivedita comes to India or if she ever comes back.

I am in a sense a retired man; I don't keep much note of what is going on about the Movement; then the Movement is getting bigger, and it is impossible for one man to know all about it minutely.

I now do nothing, except trying to eat and sleep and nurse my body the rest of the time. Good-bye, dear Mary; hope we shall meet again somewhere in this life, but, meeting or no meeting, I remain

Ever your loving brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

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THE MATH, BELUR,
7th September, 1901.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

We all work by bits, that is to say, in this cause. I try to keep down the spring, but something or other happens and the spring goes whirr, and there you are—thinking, remembering, scribbling, scrawling, and all that!

Well, about the rains—they have come down now in right earnest and it is a deluge, pouring, pouring, pouring night and day. The river is rising flooding the banks; the ponds and tanks have overflown. I have just now returned from lending a hand in cutting a deep drain to take off the water from the Math grounds. The rainwater stands at places some feet high. My huge stork is full of glee and so are the ducks and geese. My tame antelope fled from the Math and gave us some days of anxiety in finding him out. One of my ducks unfortunately died yesterday. She had been gasping for breath more than a week. One of my waggish old monks says, "Sir, it is no use living in this Kali-Yuga when ducks catch cold from damp and rain and frogs sneeze!"

One of the geese had her plumes falling off. Knowing no other method I left her some minutes in a tub of water mixed with mild carbolic, so that it might either kill or heal—and she is all right now.

Yours etc.,
VIVEKANANDA.

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GOPAL LAL VILLA,
BENARES (VARANASI) CANTONMENT,
9th February, 1902.

MY DEAR SWARUP (ANANDA),

. . . In answer to Châru's letter, tell him to study the *Brahma-Sutras* himself. What does he mean by the *Brahma-Sutras* containing references to Buddhism? He means the Bhâshyas, of course, or rather ought to mean, and Shankara was only the last Bhâshyakâra (commentator). There are references though, in Buddhistic literature, to Vedanta, and the Mahâyâna school of Buddhism is even Advaitistic. Why does Amara Singha, a Buddhist, give as one of the names of Buddha—Advayavâdi? Charu writes, the word Brahman does not occur in the Upanishads! *Quelle bêtise*!

I hold the Mahayana to be the older of the two schools of Buddhism.

The theory of Mâyâ is as old as the Rik-Samhitâ. The Shvetâshvatara Upanishad contains the word "Maya", which is developed out of Prakriti. I hold that Upanishad to be at least older than Buddhism.

I have had much light of late about Buddhism, and I am ready to prove:

(1) That Shiva-worship, in various forms, antedated the Buddhists, that the Buddhists tried to get hold of the sacred places of the Shaivas but, failing in that, made new places in the precincts just as you find now at Bodh-Gayâ and Sârnâth (Varanasi).

(2) The story in the Agni Purâna about Gayâsura does not refer to Buddha at all—as Dr. Rajendralal will have it—but simply to a pre-existing story.

(3) That Buddha went to live on Gayâshirsha mountain proves the pre-existence of the place.

(4) Gaya was a place of ancestor-worship already, and the footprint-worship the Buddhists copied from the Hindus.

(5) About Varanasi, even the oldest records go to prove it as the great place of Shiva-worship; etc., etc.

Many are the new facts I have gathered in Bodh-Gaya and from Buddhist literature. Tell Charu to read for himself, and not be swayed by foolish opinions.

I am rather well here, in Varanasi, and if I go on improving in this way, it will be a great gain.

A total revolution has occurred in my mind about the relation of Buddhism and Neo-Hinduism. I may not live to work out the glimpses, but I shall leave the lines of work indicated, and you and your brethren will have to work it out.

Yours with all blessings and love,

VIVEKANANDA

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GOPAL LAL VILLA,
BENARES (VARANASI) CANTONMENT,
10th February, 1902.

Welcome to India once more, dear mother and daughter.[1] A copy of a Madras journal that I received through the kindness of Joe delighted me exceedingly, as the reception Nivedita had in Madras was for the good of both Nivedita and Madras. Her speech was indeed beautiful.

I hope you are resting well after your long journey, and so is Nivedita. I wish it so much that you should go for a few hours to a few villages west of Calcutta to see the old Bengali structures made of wood, bamboo, cane, mica, and grass.

These are the bungalows, most artistic. Alas! the name is travested nowadays by every pigsty appropriating the name.

In old days a man who built a palace still built a bungalow for the reception of guests. The art is dying out. I wish I could build the whole of Nivedita's School in that style. Yet it is good to see the few that yet remain, at least one. Brahmananda will arrange for it, and you have only to take a journey of a few hours.

Mr. Okakura has started on his short tour. He intends to visit Agra, Gwalior, Ajanta, Ellora, Chittore, Udaipur, Jaipur, and Delhi.

A very well-educated rich young man of Varanasi, with whose father we had a long-standing friendship, came back to this city yesterday. He is especially interested in art, and spending purposely a lot of money in his attempts to revive dying Indian arts. He came to see me only a few hours after Mr. Okakura left. He is just the man to show him artistic India (i.e. what little is left), and I am sure he will be much benefited by Okakura's suggestions. Okakura just found a common terracotta water-vessel here used by the servants. The shape and the embossed work on it simply charmed him, but as it is common earthenware and would not bear the journey, he left a request with me to have it reproduced in brass. I was at my wit's end as to what to do. My young friend comes a few hours after, and not only undertakes to have it done but offers to show a few hundreds of embossed designs in terracotta infinitely superior to the one Okakura fancied.

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[1] Mrs. Ole Bull and Sister Nivedita.

He also offers to show us old paintings in that wonderful old style. Only one family is left in Varanasi who can paint after the old style yet. One of them has painted a whole hunting scene on a pea, perfect in detail and action!

I hope Okakura will come to this city on his return and be this gentleman's guest and see a bit of what is left.

Niranjan has gone with Mr. Okakura, and as he is a Japanese, they don't object to his going into any temple. It seems that the Tibetans and the other Northern Buddhists have been coming here to worship Shiva all along.

They allowed him to touch the sign of Shiva and worship. Mrs. Annie Besant tried once, but, poor woman, although she bared her feet, put on a Sâri and humiliated herself to the dust before the priests, she was not admitted even into the compound of the temple. The Buddhists are not considered non-Hindus in any of our great temples. My plans are not settled; I may shift from this place very soon.

Shivânanda and the boys send you all their welcome, regards, and love.

I am, as ever, your most affectionate son

VIVEKANANDA.

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THE MATH,
14th June, 1902.

DEAR DHIRA MATA,

. . . In my opinion, a race must first cultivate a great respect for motherhood, through the sanctification and inviolability of marriage, before it can attain to the ideal of perfect chastity. The Roman Catholics and the Hindus, holding marriage sacred and inviolate, have produced great chaste men and women of immense power. To the Arab, marriage is a contract or a forceful possession, to be dissolved at will, and we do not find there the development of the idea of the virgin or the Brahmachârin. Modern Buddhism—having fallen among races who had not yet come up to the evolution of marriage—has made a travesty of monasticism. So until there is developed in Japan a great and sacred ideal about marriage (apart from mutual attraction and love), I do not see how there can be great monks and nuns. As you have come to see that the glory of life is chastity, so my eyes also have been opened to the necessity of this great sanctification for the vast majority, in order that a few lifelong chaste powers may be produced. . . .

I wanted to write many things, but the flesh is weak. . . . "Whosoever worships Me, for whatsoever desire, I meet him with that." . . .

VIVEKANANDA.

NOTES ON PERSONS

Abhedananda, Swami : a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. Hi pre-monastic name was Kâli.

Adhyapakji : Prof. J. H. Wright of Boston who introduced Swamiji to the Parliament of Religions.

Ajit Singh : the Maharaja of Khetri and a disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

Akhandananda, Swami : a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. His pre-monastic name was Gangadhar (Ganga). He was the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission (1934-1937).

Akshay : Sj. Akshay Kumar Sen, a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna, and the author of the *Ramakrishna Punthi* (life of Shri Ramakrishna, in Bengali verse).

Alasinga : same as Alasinga Perumal.

Alasinga Perumal : a devoted follower of Swami Vivekananda. He was one of the enthusiastic group of young disciples of Madras who raised subscriptions and helped Swami Vivekananda with passage money to go to America.

Alberta : Miss Alberta Sturges, afterwards the Countess of Sandwich. She was the daughter of Mrs. Leggett.

Baburam : *see* Swami Premananda.

Balaji : D. R. Balaji Rao (Triplicane, Madras), a disciple of Swamiji, who afterwards became the Secretary to the Indian Bank, Madras.

Balaram Bose : a very favourite Calcutta disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.

Barrows, Dr. : Rev. J. H. Barrows, Chairman of the General Committee of the Parliament of Religions, Chicago.

Bhattacharya : Manmatha Nath Bhattacharya, assistant to the Accountant General, Madras. Swami Vivekananda was his guest in Madras during his wandering life.

Brahmananda, Swami : one of the foremost disciples of Shri Ramakrishna. First President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission (1899-1922). His pre-monastic name was Rakhal.

Bull (Mrs.) : Mrs. Ole Bull, wife of the celebrated violinist and Norwegian *nationalist*. She became a disciple of

Swami Vivekananda. The Swami called her "Dhirâmâtâ" (steady Mother) and would address her as "mother". She gave much financial help to Swamiji in establishing the monastery at Belur.

Charu : Charu Chandra Bose, a Pali scholar. He translated the *Dhammapada* into Bengali.

Christine, Sister : Miss Greenstidel of Detroit, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. Her love for India was next only to her devotion to the Guru. For some time she worked in the Sister Nivedita Girls' School in Calcutta.

Chuni : Chunilal Bose, a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.

Dharmapala : (afterwards) Anagarika Dharmapala, founder of the Mahabodhi Society in Calcutta.

Dhiramata : *see* Bull, Mrs. Ole.

Dinanath : (**Dinu**) : afterwards Swami Sachchidananda, a disciple of Swami Saradananda.

Dewanji Saheb : *see* Haridas Viharidas Desai, Dewan of Junagad.

Doctor : *see* Dr. Nanjunda Rao.

Dutcher, Miss : a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. It was she who was the hostess of Swami Vivekananda at the Thousand Island Park, U. S. A.

Fakir : Private tutor to Ram, son of Balaram Bose. His real name was Yajneswar Bhattacharya.

Farmer : Miss S. Farmer, an American devotee of Swami Vivekananda. At the time Miss Farmer met Swamiji, she had an organization of which she was the Head. Swamiji spent some time there.

Frankincense : *see* Leggett.

Gangadhar (also **Ganga**) : *see* Swami Akhandananda.

Gaur Ma : a lady-disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.

G. C. Ghosh : the great actor-dramatist of Bengal and a staunch devotee of Shri Ramakrishna.

G. G. : G. G. Narasimhachariar (of Bangalore), a disciple of Swamiji.

Girish Babu : same as G. C. Ghosh.

Golap Ma : a lady-disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.

Goodwin : J. J. Goodwin, an English disciple of Swami Vivekananda. It was Goodwin who mostly took down the notes of Swami Vivekananda's lectures. He was with the

Swami in America and England and accompanied him to India, where he died.

GOPAL : Gopal Junior, a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.

GREENSTIDEL : same as Christine, Sister.

GUERNSEY (MRS.) : of New York, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. For a time (in 1894) he stayed with Guernsey family and held classes and conversations.

GUPTA, SHARAT CHANDRA : Afterwards Swami Sadananda, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

HALE, (MR. and MRS.) GEORGE W. : When the Swami found himself stranded and in a helpless condition in Chicago on the day before the session of the Parliament of Religions, Mrs. George W. Hale accidentally saw him. She took him to her house, gave him the warmest hospitality and made necessary arrangements for his attending the Parliament.

HARAMOHAN (MITRA) : a lay-disciple of Shri Ramakrishna and an enthusiastic admirer of Swami Vivekananda.

HARI : *see* Swami Turiyananda.

HARIDAS VIHARIDAS DESAI (addressed as Dewanji Saheb) : Dewan of Junagad State, West India.

HARIPADA MITRA : a forest officer of Belgaum. Swami Vivekananda became his guest and stayed with him for a few days during his wandering life. He and his wife became the disciples of Swamiji.

HARIPRASANNA, afterwards Swami Vijnanananda : a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. He was the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission (1937-1938).

HARRIET HALE : a daughter of Mr. George W. Hale.

INDUMATI MITRA : wife of Haripada Mitra and a disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

INGERSOLL : Mr. Robert Ingersoll, a famous writer and lecturer of America. He was a great agnostic.

JANES : Dr. Lewis G. Janes, who was long President of the Brooklyn Ethical Association. He was an eminent scholar and lecturer of science, ethics, and religion and a great friend of the Vedanta movement in America.

JOE : also Joe Joe, *see* Miss MacLeod.

JOGEN : *see* SWAMI Yogananda.

JONSON : Mrs. Aston Jonson. She was one of the supporters of the Vedanta movement in England.

JULES BOIS : a famous philosopher, journalist and writer of France. Swami Vivekananda was his guest for a period in Paris.

KALI : *see* Swami Abhedananda.

KHOKA : Swami Subodhananda, a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.

KIDI : Singaravelu Mudaliar, Assistant Professor of Science in the Christian College, Madras. He became an ardent disciple of Swamiji who called him "Kidi".

KRIPANANDA, SWAMI : of America. *see* Landsberg.

KRISHNANANDA, SWAMI : a famous lecturer and champion of Hinduism. He was born in Bengal and his pre-monastic name was Krishnaprasanna Sen. He wrote a commentary on the Gita in Bengali.

LANDSBERG : Herr Leon Landsberg. By birth a Russian Jew, he was employed on the staff of a prominent New York paper. He became a monastic disciple of Swami Vivekananda with the name of Swami Kripananda.

LEGGETT : Mr. and Mrs. Francis H. Leggett, well-known society family of New York, became disciples of Swami Vivekananda and helped him in various ways. Sometimes the Master used to address Mr. Francis Leggett in the endearing term of "Frankincense".

M. (also **MASTER MAHASHAY**) : Mahendra Nath Gupta, a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna and author of *Shri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* (*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*). Sometimes mentioned as Mahendra Babu.

MACLEOD : Miss Josephine MacLeod of New York, one of the foremost American disciples of Swami Vivekananda. She helped Swami Vivekananda and his work in very many ways.

MANI IYER : same as Subrahmanya Iyer.

MARGOT : Miss Margaret E. Noble, same as Sister Nivedita.

MARIE : Miss Marie Halboister.

MARY : Miss Mary Hale, daughter of Mr. George W. Hale of Chicago.

MASTER MAHASHAY : *see* M.

MOHAMMED SARFARAZ HUSAIN : a Mohammedan gentleman of Naini Tal, who wished to retire and serve humanity.

MOHIN: Mahendra Nath Dutta, younger brother of Swami Vivekananda.

MOTHER Church: Swami Vivekananda styled Mrs. George W. Hale "Mother Church" and Mr. Hale "Father Pope". *see* Hale.

MRINALINI BOSE: a distant relative and a disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

MÜLLER: Miss Henrietta Müller, an English disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

NANJUNDA RAO (DR.): of Madras. A disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

NARASIMHACHARIAR (Rao Bahadur R.): He was the Director of Archaeological Survey, the Government of Mysore.

NIRANJAN: *see* SWAMI Niranjanananda.

NIRANJANANANDA, SWAMI: a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. His pre-monastic name was Niranjan.

NIRMALANANDA, SWAMI: a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. His pre-monastic name was Tulsi.

NIVEDITA, SISTER: (Miss Margaret E. Noble), a British disciple of Swami Vivekananda. She completely identified herself with the mission of her Guru and the cause of India. Swami Vivekananda gave her the new name Nivedita— meaning dedicated, which was so appropriate with her life and activities.

NOBLE: Miss Margaret E. Noble. *see* Nivedita.

PAVHARI BABA: the famous saint of Ghazipur.

PRAMADADAS MITRA: an inhabitant of Varanasi. For his profound erudition and piety, Swami Vivekananda had the highest regard.

PREMANANDA, SWAMI: a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. His pre-monastic name was Baburam.

PYARI MOHAN MUKHERJEE, RAJA, C.S.I.: who presided over the meeting organized by the citizens of Calcutta to congratulate Swami Vivekananda on his success at the Parliament of Religions.

RAKHAL: *see* Swami Brahmananda.

RAM: son of Balaram Bose.

RAMABAI: a Brahmin widow of Maharashtra who embraced Christianity and worked for the education of Indian women.

RAMAKRISHNANANDA, SWAMI : a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. His pre-monastic name was Shashi.

RAMDAYAL : Sj. Ramdayal Chakravarty of Antpur, a devotee of Shri Ramakrishna. He belonged to the priest-family of Sj. Balaram Bose.

SANYAL, VAIKUNTHA NATH : a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.

SARA : Mrs. Sara C. Bull—same as Mrs. Ole Bull.

SARADA : *see* Swami Trigunatitananda (or Trigunatita).

SARADANANDA, SWAMI : a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. First Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, holding the office from 1899 to 1927. His pre-monastic name was Sharat.

SARALA GHOSHAL : afterwards known as Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, a niece of Rabindra Nath Tagore.

SHARAT : *see* SWAMI SARADANANDA.

SHARAT CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY : a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who compiled *Swami Shishya Samvada*, afterwards translated into English as *Swamiji's Message to a Disciple.*

SHASHI : *see* Swami Ramakrishnananda.

SHASHI (SANYAL) : an orthodox Brahmin with bigoted views. He had a good following.

SHASHIBHUSHAN : Dr. Shashibhushan Ghosh. He came into contact with Shri Ramakrishna and afterwards wrote a biography of Shri Ramakrishna in Bengali.

SEVIER : Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Sevier, English disciples of Swami Vivekananda who dedicated their lives to the cause of Vedanta. They came to India and established the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati, Almora.

SHANKARLAL, PANDIT : an inhabitant of Khetri and a great devotee of Swami Vivekananda.

SHIVANANDA, SWAMI : a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission (1922-1934). His pre-monastic name was Tarak.

SHUDDHANANDA, SWAMI : a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. Latterly he became the Secretary, and afterwards President, of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission (1938).

STURDY : Mr. E. T. Sturdy, an English devotee of Swami Vivekananda. He helped the Vedanta work of Swamiji in England. In his early days he came to India and underwent severe asceticism in the hill-station of Almora, U.P.

Ṣubodhananda, Swami : a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. His pre-monastic name was Subodh. *see* also Khoka.

Subrahmanya Iyer : Justice Sir S. Subrahmanya Iyer.

Suresh : Sj. Surendra Nath Mitra, a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna, who would call him Suresh.

Swarup : Swami Swarupananda, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. First President of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati.

Tarak : *see* Swami Shivananda.

Tesla : Mr. Nicolas Tesla, distinguished electrician of America.

Trigunatitananda, Swami : also called Trigunatita. A disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. His pre-monastic name was Sarada.

Tulsi : *see* Swami Nirmalananda.

Turiyananda, Swami : a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. His pre-monastic name was Hari.

Yogananda, Swami : a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. His pre-monastic name was Jogen.

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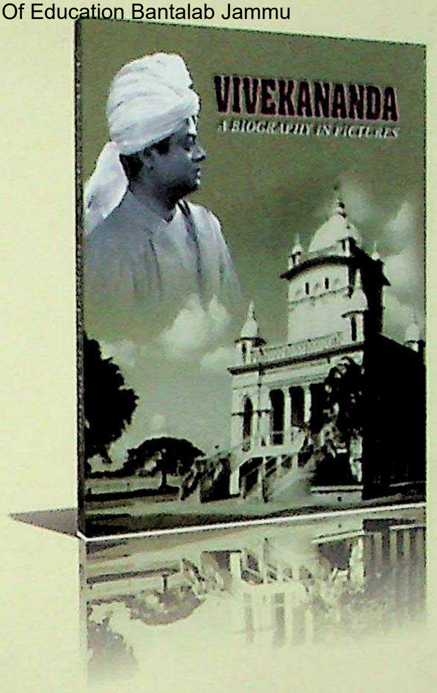

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